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E. ANNE MACKAY (ED.)

SIGNS OF ORALITY

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THE ORAL TRADITION AND ITS INFLUENCE IN THE GREEK AND ROMAN WORLD

EDITED BY

E. ANNE MACKAY

BRILL
LEIDEN · BOSTON · KÖLN
1999

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Signs of orality : the oral tradition and its influence in the Greek and Roman world / edited by E. Anne Mackay.
p. cm. — (Mnemosyne, bibliotheca classica Batava. Supplementum, ISSN 0169-8958 ; 188)
Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.
ISBN 9004112731 (cloth : alk. paper)
1. Classical literature—History and criticism. 2. Language and culture—Greece. 3. Language and culture—Rome. 4. Oral-formulaic Analysis. 5. Oral tradition—Greece. 6. Oral tradition—Rome. 7. Greece—Civilization. 8. Rome—Civilization. 9. Homer—Technique. I. Mackay, E. Anne. II. Series.
PA3009.S55 1998
880'.09—dc21 98-41718
CIP

Die Deutsche Bibliothek - CIP-Einheitsaufnahme

[Mnemosyne / Supplementum]
Mnemosyne : bibliotheca classica Batava. Supplementum. – Leiden ; Boston ; Köln : Brill
Früher Schriftenreihe
Teilw. u.d.T.: Mnemosyne / Supplements
Reihe Supplementum zu: Mnemosyne
188. Signs of orality. – 1998

Signs of orality : the oral tradition and its influence in the Greek and Roman world / ed. by Anne Mackay. – Leiden ; Boston ; Köln : Brill, 1998
(Mnemosyne : Supplementum ; 188)
ISBN 90-04-11273-1

ISSN 0169-8958
ISBN 90 04 11273 1

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PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

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PREFACE

The intention of this volume is to offer a critical examination of the perceived interface between oral tradition and written literature in the ancient world. This reflects a current trend among oral theorists towards challenging the construct of an oral tradition in counterpoise to subsequent written literature, and recognising that the oral traditional narrative system continued to pervade potentially every form of cultural expression in the subsequent literate development of the society, wherever written or other forms of text (such as vase-paintings) relate to traditional or traditionalised forms of verbal presentation. The chapters were originally delivered as papers at a conference entitled *Epos and Logos*, held at the University of Natal, Durban, South Africa in July 1996.[1] The title of the volume was inspired by John Miles Foley's keynote address at the conference, "Reading between the signs: Homer and Oral Tradition", which explored the concept of the word *sêma* (sign) in relation to reception of the Homeric texts in particular and oral literature more generally.[2] *Epos and Logos* was the second in what has become a biennial series of orality conferences: the first, entitled *Voice into Text*, was organised by Ian Worthington at the University of Tasmania, Hobart, Australia in July 1994,[3] and the third, also under the title *Epos and Logos*, is to be hosted in July 1998 by Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, with Janet Watson as organiser.

Throughout the volume, translations from Greek and Latin are the authors' own unless otherwise indicated; while an attempt has been made to standardise the spelling of Greek names in transliterated form, the usual anomalies must be acknowledged in the interests of traditional reference: some, like Sokrates, were hesitated over, Thoukydides was rejected along with Aristoteles and Platon. Names of Greek works are

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[1] For a report on this conference, see N. W. Slater in *Gnomon* 69.6 (1997), 571; abstracts of all the papers delivered at the conference are published in *Scholia. Natal Studies in Classical Antiquity* 5 (1996), 161-70, and may also be accessed electronically at http://www.und.ac.za/und/classics/scholia/eposconf.html. The papers selected for this volume have all been peer-refereed.

[2] A detailed discussion is included in Foley (1999: Ch.1).

[3] Selected proceedings of the Tasmania conference were published in Worthington (1996).

for the most part cited in the familiar Latin forms, following the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (which indeed served as an invaluable reference for texts). The two papers on Latin texts preserve their linguistic ambience by citing Greek names in Latinised forms.

I should like to acknowledge the assistance of a number of colleagues and graduate students who helped in various ways with the production of this volume: Chuck Chandler, William Dominik, Bill Henderson, Dawie Kriel, Danie Lombard and Richard Whitaker; Jonathan Cole, Tamaryn Pieterse and Adrian Ryan; and the members of my Department in Durban, particularly Joy McGill. I am especially appreciative of the on-going support and encouragement of my husband, Jürgen Lieskounig, in this as in all my endeavours. For help in obtaining museum photographs and reproduction rights, special thanks are due to Joan Mertens of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; F. W. Hamdorf of the Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek, Munich; Alison Holcroft and Roslynne Bell of the James Logie Memorial Collection, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand; Karen L. Otis of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Charles Kline of the University of Pennsylvania Museum; Francesco Buranelli of the Vatican Museum; Margaret Legge of the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; and the staff of the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities and the Photographic Service of the British Museum. Acknowledgement must further be made of a grant from the Centre for Science Development of the Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa, which made possible John Miles Foley's visit to South Africa; and generous funding from the University Research Fund of the University of Natal met the various costs associated with the editing process. Finally, all those who participated in the *Epos and Logos* (1996) conference, especially in the often challenging discussions following the papers, made a contribution to the general intellectual outcome of the conference, one that has been variously acknowledged by the contributors to this volume, and that is appropriately brought into prominence here.

Anne Mackay
Durban, June 1998

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT'S IN A SIGN

John Miles Foley

Scholars and students interested in oral traditions are fortunate to be living in an exciting time. Reports are emerging from all corners of the world documenting a vast panoply of verbal art, plastic art, and related forms that depend as much on voice, performance, audience, and traditional rules for composition as on the written, printed, or inscribed page or surface. We are becoming ever more aware of how indebted many of our most cherished literary works and most treasured artefacts are to preliterary or paraliterary media. The Judeo-Christian Bible reveals its oral traditional roots; mediaeval European manuscripts are penned by performing scribes; geometric vases from archaic Greece mirror Homer's oral style.[1] Even when we look closer to home within our own highly industrialised cultures and societies, we find traditional languages and modes of representation surviving tenaciously in surprisingly prominent positions. In South Africa, Nelson Mandela's visit to the Transkei region becomes the subject of a Xhosa praise-singer or *imbongi*; in the United States a university professor proves a leading resource for the oral tradition of Jack tales.[2] Indeed, if these final decades of the millennium have taught us anything, it must be that oral tradition never was the 'other' we accused it of being; it never was the primitive, preliminary technology of communication we thought it had to be. Rather, if the whole truth is told, oral tradition stands out as the single most dominant communicative technology of our species, as both a his-

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[1] On the roots of the Bible, see esp. Niditch (1995) and (1997: Hebrew Bible) and Kelber (1997: New Testament); on Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, O'Keeffe (1990); on geometric art, esp. Whitman (1958). On the variety of oral traditions and related forms, see, e.g., Foley (1985: updated version available electronically at http://www.missouri.edu/~csottime) and the continuing contents of the journal *Oral Tradition*; also relevant are the pedagogical approaches one can employ in teaching such diversity: see esp. Foley (1998a); also (1994). On the rules for composition in ancient Greek, Anglo-Saxon, and South Slavic epic (the process as opposed to the product), see Foley (1990).

[2] See, respectively, Kaschula (1995), McCarthy *et al.* (1994).

torical fact and, in many areas still, a contemporary reality. The miracle of the flat inscribable surface and Gutenberg's genius aside, even the electronic revolution cannot challenge the long-term preeminence of oral tradition.

A Lost Paradise and the 'Fortunate Fall'

As part of our new awareness of just how widespread and significant this medium has been and continues to be, however, we have suffered an unavoidable fall from innocence. In the early days of the so-called Oral Theory, founded on Milman Parry and Albert Lord's great experiment in the South Slavic lands, everything seemed simple and manageable.[3] The South Slavic *guslar*, or singer of tales, compared quite closely with Homer, they argued, and soon their theory was enthusiastically generalised—without appreciable adjustment, it must be said—to scores of other traditions. Oral and literate were taken as a fundamental dichotomy inherent in human culture: people, verbal art, even whole societies were confidently labelled with one or the other term, and, crucially, never with both. Many Western scholars, immersed in texts as a way of defining their identity and making their living, drew an unambiguous line in the sand: on one side stood the well organised and highly drilled forces of literacy and authored texts, on the other side the rag-tag, guerrilla bands of orality and the textless works of illiterate bards. As I have argued elsewhere,[4] this schism was a credible and even necessary first approximation, in that the binary model created space for thinking about something besides individual authors and master-texts. But it was also the initial move in a larger trajectory from a false dichotomy to a more realistic, nuanced understanding of verbal art in its many guises. In this sense the Great Divide concept of orality versus literacy served as an overture of simplicity to the complex symphony we are now challenged to hear and understand.

Let us be as forthright as possible about this evolution, for it must be admitted that the rediscovery of oral tradition in the twentieth century has not proceeded without some painful realisations. The passage from Eden to postlapsarian reality was in many ways a difficult and disillu-

[3] On the early evolution of the Oral Theory, see Foley (1988).

[4] See esp. Foley (1997), (1999); on the philological basis of the comparison between ancient Greek and South Slavic epic, Foley (1996).

sioning one. No, we soon discovered, not every oral tradition worked in precisely the same way. No, the South Slavic model (based exclusively on a single sub-genre of epic, the Moslem epic) could not be generalised to all forms in all traditions. No, the notion of 'formula', a linguistic byte first located in Homer and then paralleled in numerous other bodies of work, was not a Platonic form; nor, for that matter, was any other unit or pattern a universal constituent or an unmistakable symptom of 'genuine' oral tradition. No, all works of verbal art did not conveniently sort themselves according to what was quickly exposed as the misleading typology of orality versus literacy. More subtly, those who had argued strenuously against the idea of an oral tradition behind ancient and mediaeval works—sometimes carefully and critically and sometimes ideologically and self-servingly—had to be granted a fair hearing; their arguments had to be digested; and their often very useful perspectives had to be honestly considered and responded to in the ensuing discussion. These realisations went far beyond the conventional wisdom of the early Oral Theory and frankly put the lie to more than a few Romantic conceptions about oral traditions. The world of verbal and plastic art became a far more complex place than our initial grasp of oral tradition had allowed us to see, and the result was unsettling.

But if the painful shift from the uncluttered simplicity of a lost paradise to an ever-increasing complexity represented a fall from innocence, it was also a *felix culpa*, a fortunate fall. With Eden behind us, we have been able to pay closer attention to the wonderful diversity of oral traditions and ask the kinds of questions that only a few years ago could not have been posed. We know now that cultures are not oral or literate; rather they employ a menu or spectrum of communicative strategies, some of them associated with texts, some with voices, and some with both. Likewise, we know that people are seldom either literate or illiterate, oral or post-oral; rather we recognise that even a single individual employs a repertoire of possible methods of communication, depending on genre or speech-act, communicative strategy, audience, and other factors. We still look for meaningful comparisons across cultures and traditions, but we no longer expect prelapsarian unity. That is, we are just as attentive to differences as to similarities, just as concerned with social embedding as with extruded texts, and the theorem is self-evident: if no two languages or societies are ever entirely congruent, then how can the traditions they support ever wholly converge? And last, and perhaps most importantly, our fortunate fall from grace has licensed the

development of a poetics for oral traditions and their kin; we now ask not just how they *work* but how they *mean*, not just what the structures and patterns are but what they imply.[5] Given the characteristic forms of Homeric epic or Attic vase-painting, do we 'read' their verbal or plastic text any differently? If so, how? And with what result? What contribution does the idiomatic nature of such specialised languages make to the reception of traditional art?

Signs of Orality offers breakthrough answers to these and related questions, and in doing so it shakes quite a few comfortable sinecures of unexamined opinion that have long constrained studies in oral tradition and numerous other approaches as well. Revisionist essays on Homer start the discussion, with authors tackling demanding issues like historical memory, Homer's audience(s), descriptive strategies, ring-composition, and the status of orality as a constitutive feature of the epics. But the symposium does not end with the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, as only a decade ago it almost certainly would have. Reflecting the new diversity and extension of studies in oral tradition, this volume also presents engaging and virtually unprecedented treatments of Greek oratory, vase-painting, and important later texts. Not only the "blind master from Chios", then, but the orators, plastic artists, Virgil, Pliny, Plutarch, and Lucian come under examination, as the notion of oral tradition expands beyond the initial model of the epic poet composing in performance to encompass a wide variety of artistic endeavours. Even if counterintuitively, the collection as a whole argues, ancient orators, vase-painters, and literate later word-smiths belong to Homer's tribe.

And what unites this heterogeneity? What legitimises the presentation of these essays as a composite investigation? In a word, it is *the similarity of their languages*—more specifically, the close comparability of the expressive strategies that underlie their presentation. For if we set aside the cul-de-sac of oral versus literate, which has generated unrealistic, air-tight dichotomies that obscure rather than explain their contents, we will be able to glimpse correspondences that the false dichotomy had legislated out of existence. Our fall from innocence prepared the way by clearing away obstacles and providing an opportunity to redefine the object and nature of our study; now we need to participate

[5] On this poetics of implication, with applications to numerous genres from the ancient Greek, South Slavic, and Anglo-Saxon traditions, see Foley (1991), (1995), and esp. (1999).

actively and open-mindedly in fashioning a poetics that matches the real-life complexity of oral tradition and related forms.

Traditional Signs and Traditional Referentiality

One of the thorniest dilemmas for Homeric scholarship from the ancient world onward has been how to interpret the repeating, frequently employed phrases and patterns that are so typical of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. At its outset the Oral Theory insisted upon a mechanistic explanation for these recurrent features. The pressure of composition in performance, it was argued, must account for the poet's deployment of ready-made verses and typical scenes. Along with the Great Divide of orality versus literacy, this explanation from exigency helped to constitute a 'theory of the Other' whereby scholars created distance between literature and oral tradition, making room for the subject of their study by declaring it wholly different from more familiar expressive forms and formats. We can see in retrospect that the composition-in-performance hypothesis was a necessary first step, awakening us to the possibility of 'another' kind of composition, audience, and verbal art.

But the explanation from exigency could not withstand close examination. It was particularly classicists (but also specialists in Old English, Old French, mediaeval Spanish, and numerous non-Western areas) who objected to seeing Homer and his counterparts in other traditions as nothing more than gifted assemblers of parts; they felt, with some justice, that the Oral Theory as initially construed could not account for the artistic excellence of the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and other long-acclaimed—and putatively 'literary'—works. The more open-minded of these revisionists called for a modified approach that took the measure of the rediscovery of oral tradition without relinquishing Homer's art. Indeed, not only in ancient Greek studies but across the international spread of disciplines ancient to modern, similar developments began to occur. Classicists sought a way to mesh the new perspectives on Homer's oral tradition with their sense of his surpassing artistry, and their colleagues in other disciplines pursued the same goal. This was of course an extremely difficult course to chart, not least because neither the oralists nor the scripsists were ordinarily willing to cede much ground in their competition for the *temenos* of ancient Greek epic, and intransigence often ruled the day, whatever the tradition or work. The usual strategy on both sides, at any rate in those cases when the territorial imperative did not

translate to simple intolerance of the other position, amounted to downplaying the opposition's argument or subsuming it within one's own perspective. Homer may well have stemmed from oral tradition, so one version of this rearguard argument goes, but in his genius he escaped its limitations to fashion a brilliantly original work of art. Attitudes like this are still with us.[6] Although Homer's epics and countless other works are straightforwardly credited with having originated from an oral tradition, a composite poetics—an approach that takes account of both traditional character and what some have construed as 'literary' quality—has been elusive.[7]

In suggesting an avenue toward just such a composite poetics, I start with Homer's own concept of signs, or *sêmata* as he calls them.[8] Those objects or events that he labels 'signs' have in common the property of serving as keys to an otherwise hidden reality. Whether a *sêma* describes one of Zeus' omens, Teiresias' prophecy of the oar or winnowing shovel, Odysseus' telltale scar, or the olive-tree bed, it dependably designates an emergent reality, a prolepsis, a secret known only to a chosen few. But it does so obliquely, by indexical reference, rather than by simply naming its subject. To those not 'in the know', the bed is just a bed, nothing more and nothing less; bird-omens require interpretation by a qualified seer and can otherwise be impenetrable; the scar does not explain itself unless its viewer knows the background of Odysseus' youthful engagement with the boar. Even the *sêmata* that mark heroic interments do their job of memorialising heroic fame only when one is able to supply the implied information.[9] Homer's signs are always replete with significance, but become transparent only when one fluently understands their language.

On the basis of this indexical function of the word *sêma* in the Homeric poems, I then take a second step. By analogy I view the formulas,

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[6] For Homeric studies, see, e.g., Lloyd-Jones (1992), which proceeds from a flawed awareness of the South Slavic epic tradition (details in Foley [1997: 161-62]), and Stanley (1993), for whom Homeric ring-composition marks ancient Greek epic as necessarily literate and literary (but see Lord [1986a: 53-64] on ring-composition in South Slavic oral epic).

[7] On the history of the Oral Theory as applied to Homer, see esp. Edwards (1986), (1988), (1992).

[8] This section on Homeric signs is a *précis* of the opening chapter of *Homer's Traditional Art* (Foley [1999: esp. Ch. 1]).

[9] Like the other *sêmata*, tumuli divulge their significance only to the qualified few; they stand implicitly for a hero and that hero's accomplishments but do not explicitly name the individual memorialised.

typical scenes, and story-patterns—the linguistic bytes or speech-acts that constitute traditional language—as also *sêmata* or signs, as concrete parts that stand for intangible wholes. That is, formulaic phrases like "swift-footed Achilleus" or "ox-eyed Hera" become keys that unlock traditional realities, automatically alluding to complex ideas (the multi-chaptered biography of a hero or goddess, in the present example) by citation of the agreed-upon code.[10] In this fashion the sign refers not to the everyday, objective meaning of its components, but to a *traditional referentiality*. With this concept of a larger 'word' or unit of discourse serving as an index to the tradition, we no longer need to worry over the bare situational suitability of such phrases. "Swift-footed Achilleus", by appealing not to a conventional lexicon but to traditional usage, simply summons the whole of the named figure to centre-stage. Achilleus need not be sprinting or even poised to run, any more than Hera's eyes need figure directly in the scene in which she is invoked (and evoked) by this designation. Homer's formulaic names for his *dramatis personae* refer to the tradition at large, economically conjuring the actors, script and résumé in hand.

But noun-epithet formulas are not the only such signs, not the sole keys that unlock traditional referentiality. Because they depend upon literal meaning only as a means to a greater end, *sêmata* or signs of other types and sizes can also encode idiomatic meanings that only the properly prepared audience is equipped to understand. Like the olive-tree bed, such proverbial signals speak powerfully to complex ideas that are accessible in no other way. Among these other signs are noun-epithet formulas for states of mind, such as "green fear" (*chlôron deos*). On the surface this phrase looks like a metaphor of modest proportions; indeed, it is often translated as "pale fear" in order to take advantage of the English metaphor. But "green fear" always and everywhere evokes a supernaturally inspired dread. There is of course nothing explicit in either *chlôron* or *deos* to indicate this specialised meaning of the larger 'word' or expression, but within the dedicated language (or register) of Homer it always has this sense. *Chlôron deos* is an indivisible sign, a

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[10] On this uniquely economical code for characterisation via *sêmata*, see further Foley (1991: 18-28) and esp. (1995: 150-60) (on *kratus Argeiphontês*, "mighty slayer of Argos").

sêma that points to a traditional meaning, a 'word' that is fully intelligible only to those fluent in the epic register.[11]

Other signs include the myriad typical scenes in Homer—the feast, the assembly, the stylised combats, and so on—and the overall story-pattern or tale-type as a whole.[12] At both of these levels, *sêmata* connote more than their literal, denotative sense; they point toward an immanent and traditional referentiality, harbouring resonant implications that the suitably equipped audience or reader will hear. For instance, with almost absolute regularity the feast scene consists of a prior purification, seating of the guest, stock descriptions of the food and drink served, one or two lines that end the scene with formulaic acknowledgement of the feasters' satisfaction with the meal, and some actual or promised mediation of a present problem.[13] Between and among these smaller signs—and within the larger sign of the feast as a whole—the poet weaves situation-specific details, personalising the ritual event, emphasising differences by juxtaposing them to an expectable, virtually ritualistic sameness.

How is the feast in *Odyssey* 1 to be perceived, for instance? Within the matrix of conventional actions and against the background of traditional referentiality, the suitors' usurping and wasteful behaviour stands out even more starkly, and Telemachos' apparent helplessness is all the more affecting because in Odysseus' absence he is slotted as the substitute host for his father's old guest-friend Mentes. Likewise the other feasts in the poem: whether the meal is shared with Menelaos, the Phaiakians, Kyklops, Kirke, Laertes, or whomever, each interlude is both idiomatically the same and individually unique. Each time the familiar apparatus appears, it reminds us of the expectable progression of actions associated with feasting Homerically, playing the traditional frame of reference off against the peculiarities of the local situation. As with all signs, whatever their size or variety, both traditional echoes and situational uniqueness matter. Homeric art stems not from one or the other exclusively, but from their intersection.

We can glimpse the same combination of traditional referentiality and immediate context in the most extensive of Homeric *sêmata*—the

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11 For a full discussion of *chlôron deos*, see Foley (1999: Ch. 7).

12 On typical scenes, see esp. Edwards (1992); also Reece (1993).

13 This is the overall trajectory of the narrative 'word' as it occurs in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; see further Foley (1999: Ch. 6).

story-pattern.[14] Comparative research has established a full morphology for the Return Song, the tale-type of which the *Odyssey* is the sole surviving example from ancient Greece. Once this larger interpretative context is taken into account, it becomes apparent that Odysseus' homecoming is idiomatically guaranteed from the opening words of the poem. According to a traditionally sanctioned progression, the returning hero will escape captivity, proceed successfully through any number of life-threatening challenges, arrive home in disguise in order to evade detection by the suitors and to test his family and household, and ultimately reveal himself, meting out vengeance to those who deserve it. At the end of his travels, as comparative evidence indicates (and Proclus' skeletal summary of the contents of the so-called Epic Cycle hints), he may find a Penelope figure or he may find her unfaithful opposite, a Klytemnestra figure, awaiting him. In short, this pattern, which occurs in hundreds of epics from the Russian, Bulgarian, Albanian, and many other traditions, drives Odysseus' adventures and defines the sequence of his *nostos*.

But even this largest of signs does not predict the ending of the given poem. From the perspective of traditional referentiality, it is always the spouse or fiancée who determines the long-delayed climax, and who by doing so becomes the pivotal figure in the epic in a special sense. It is she, not her mate, who either heroically holds the ever-threatening suitors at bay through cunning and superior intelligence or chooses to desert her marriage or betrothal vow in order to take up with one of her petitioners. Whatever the case, she remains ambiguous—and vitally so—until the last moment, and we need to credit her functional indeterminacy as part of the overall proceedings. Recognising the Return Song as a heavily coded sign in its own right restores an otherwise lost context for the roles played by Penelope and Odysseus. Once again, by understanding the idiomatic content of a *sêma*—not its literal meaning but its implications—we read the singular poem within its tradition.

In all of these instances and so many more, the fundamental realisation must be simply this: it is not the sign itself, but rather what it points to, that matters. If on a purely literal examination Homer seems to 'nod' in his choice of phrase, scene, or story-pattern, we would do well to ask whether the short-circuit in communication can be traced to our own

[14] For a full discussion of the Return Song story-pattern and its powerful role in the art of the *Odyssey*, see Foley (1999: Ch. 5).

lack of fluency in his register. Is the supposed flaw truly a blemish or have we failed to hear the unspoken, idiomatic implications of the verse, scene, or larger pattern? Is it Homer or his latter-day, text-centric readership who is nodding? Borrowing a poetic term from the bard himself, we might emphasise that the 'pathways' (*oimai*) of oral traditional epic are important not chiefly in and of themselves but rather because of where they lead.[15]

From Signs to Proverbs

In an effort to appreciate the contribution of signs to oral traditions in general and to Homer in particular—and also to suit the medium to the message—I present below a small cache of home-made scholarly proverbs. My hope is that these facsimile aphorisms will perform at least two functions. First, they will point the way, in an admittedly pseudo-traditional manner, toward a more realistic understanding of oral traditions and related forms. Since genuine proverbs customarily act as cultural linch-pins, made-up proverbs seem a logical medium for indexing a few key ideas about a complicated and enormous subject. Second, these aphorisms will provide a set of pertinent observations with which to frame a subsequent brief discussion of each contribution to this collective volume, a kind of 'folk hermeneutics' that will highlight the unique thrust of each essay by putting its key correspondences into relief. By borrowing an arrow from the oral traditional quiver, then, I propose to illuminate our larger subject on its own terms, via a collection of hopefully memorable bytes that can serve as handy reminders of fundamental premises. For the moment I will explain each of these nuggets of wisdom only telegraphically, preferring to let them explain themselves by example and in context during the discussion of individual essays below.

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[15] For a comparison between oral tradition and the Internet, which are alike in their dependence on pathways (as opposed to the Alexandrian Library, the prototype resource of objects), see Foley (1998b).

An Almanac of Homemade Proverbs

1. Oral traditions work like language, only more so

Oral traditions are not mere collections of items or structures but elegant expressive instruments dedicated to specific purposes. That is, they are not warehouses or inventories of things but rather *languages* that offer enormous communicative potential for fluent speakers, hearers, writers, readers, and other interpreters. We understand oral traditions best not when we worry over their superficial narrowness or limitations, but when we seek to discover their enhanced signification and rich coding—what lies behind their signs or *sêmata*. Because oral traditions tend to employ focused varieties of language (or registers), they customarily sacrifice the broad applicability of general-purpose language in order to do fewer things well. In this respect they are usually more densely idiomatic and resonant than everyday registers: they work like language, only more so.

2. Performance is the enabling event, tradition the enabling referent

In the case of a living oral tradition, the very act of performance bears special meaning. When a singer bows the *kithara* or *gusle*, strums the *tambura*, sings a prelude, joins hands with a co-singer, or in some other way indicates that the performance has begun, he or she is prescribing a preselected channel for communication. It is that channel to which the audience must also tune in order to establish and maintain a coherent exchange. In the case of an oral-derived text or the painted surface of a vase, performance can be keyed rhetorically, using some of the same signals but now transposed to a written or inscribed libretto that guides readers to the correct channel. In either situation the event of performance, real or rhetorical, enables the exchange. The second part of the proverb teaches that signs point toward *traditional referentiality*, toward a set of idiomatic implications, whatever the medium (performance, text, artefact). Traditional referentiality enables an extremely economical transaction of meaning, with the modest, concrete part standing for a larger and more complex whole. *Pars pro toto* is the fundamental principle.

3. Composition and reception are two sides of the same coin

For many years studies in oral tradition privileged composition over reception, seeking to explain the apparent miracle of the preliterate singer's performance of long epic. This focus on tectonics downplayed the role and responsibility of the audience or reader and shifted emphasis away from what the performance or text actually meant—or, more precisely, *how* it could mean. But traditional language offers a referential as well as a compositional advantage, provided that the audience or reader is fluent in that specialised tongue. When the referential advantage diminishes (not necessarily immediately upon the advent of writing and texts), the traditional language may be cast aside and a more useful expressive instrument may take its place. Thus reception and composition are indissolubly linked.

4. Artis causa, *not* metri causa

"For the sake of art, not for the sake of metre" speaks most directly to the formulaic diction so typical of Homeric epic, which appears to be shaped primarily according to the demands of the hexameter—*metri causa* is the usual term. If this is so, some have asked, then how can we ascribe poetic excellence to Homer? Could he and his forebears exercise any choice in naming people and gods in the epics, for example, or were they simply prisoners of the inherited diction, forced into compliance by the tyranny of a prefabricated language? The same problem is easily extended to other traditional patterns in the oral-derived text and on the traditionally painted vase, which (though not directly metrical) may also be seen as overdetermined by a limited repertoire of expressive strategies. This proverb—"Artis causa, *not* metri causa"—contends that meaning and art come first, that stock expressions and patterns have resonance not as original creations or situation-specific usages but as traditional signs or *sêmata.* The signs themselves may be metrically governed or otherwise limited in their morphology, but their implications are often profound and compelling.

5. Read both behind and between the signs

To read *behind* Homer's signs is to tap into their idiomatic and traditional implications, to take into account the otherwise hidden associations for which they stand *pars pro toto*, the part for the whole. For our present purposes such traditional referentiality will be our main concern,

primarily because it has received such limited attention in the past. But outside our current emphasis that focus in itself is not enough. We must also be aware of what lies *between* the signs: the local, immediate, and individual details that are full partners in the negotiation of verbal art and the other forms examined in this volume. What is the contribution of the individual poet, orator, philosopher, or historian? How does the individual vase use the traditional style and yet manage to make a singular statement? The best perspective is a balanced and stereoscopic view that appreciates both sides of the process. We cannot afford to neglect either between-the-signs singularity or behind-the-signs resonance.[16]

The Primacy of Tradition

In concert with what I have said about signs and their idiomatic value, and in preparation for the authors' treatments of various texts and artefacts later in this volume, let me draw together the five proverbs by making explicit a core premise on which they all depend. Contrary to what the history of studies in this area would lead us to expect, the crucial term in the phrase 'oral tradition' is not the former but the latter one. As many scholars from different fields have shown, to call something oral is to beg many more questions than are answered.[17] Oral epic bards qualify, but how about oral performers of fixed texts (e.g., *aoidoi* vs. *rhapsoidoi* in ancient Greece)? What about poets who apparently 'write' their compositions down in the virtual text of their own memories before ever giving them public voice?[18] Are they to be grouped with bards who compose in performance? How do we handle the remarkably disparate forms of Native American verbal art, where orality and literacy intertwine in many fascinating and challenging ways and in which social

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[16] Let me emphasise that these five proverbs focus on oral-connected traditional art, but make no claim to categorically distinguish that body of expression (itself heterogeneous) from verbal art in written, textual media. Reading behind as well as between the signs, to take one example, is to an extent a mandate for all poetry and prose, or even all verbal communication in any medium. While this maxim becomes especially important for understanding traditional poetic language, it is not restricted to that arena.

[17] See esp. the early work by Finnegan (1977).

[18] For examples of myriad different relationships between memorisation and performance in African 'oral' genres, see esp. Okpewho (1992), Finnegan (1970).

context and ritual are so inescapably a part of the performance of text?[19] And how about the plethora of oral-derived texts, which employ the language of oral tradition but were in many cases never intended for oral performance? Pushing the envelope yet further, consider the many hybrid novels penned by African and African American writers, works that combine a narrative frame of highly literate European origin with expressive strategies and content that stem directly from folklore and oral tradition.[20] Do we consign such vigorous works to 'literature' or 'orature' (knowing that by either choice we ignore a vital dimension of their art)?

Questions such as these reveal the porousness of the category 'oral': in seeking to explain a phenomenon that seemed antithetical to the textual communication practised so widely in the culture of academia, we have lumped together an enormous number of manifestly different forms. And not only have we diluted the natural variety of the spectrum in the process, but, even more basically, we have also misdescribed each of them by recourse to a false 'common denominator'. Orality alone simply has not proven as radical a concept as we once thought it had to be; research from the study and from the field has shown clearly that the term and concept are not dependably diagnostic of the kind of communication we designate via the expression 'oral tradition'.

Tradition, on the other hand, bypasses the work's external appearance as sound, text, or inscribed surface and speaks directly to the fundamental rules that govern its composition and reception.[21] Tradition designates the referent toward which signs point; the idiomatic value of formulae, typical scenes, and story-patterns; the shared sense of implied meaning that serves as the basis for exchange—whether the exchange takes place between a South Slavic oral epic bard and his or her audience, the African novelist and his or her readership, or the ancient Greek

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[19] For a suggestion of the span of 'oral' and 'written' literature in this area, see Swann and Krupat (1987).

[20] On such hybrid forms, see esp. Obiechina (1992), Prahlad (1998).

[21] I am well aware of the wide varieties of meaning this term has been accorded in folklore studies, literary studies, and anthropology; see Ben-Amos (1984) for a useful review of many of them. It is employed here in the sense of "a dynamic, multivalent body of meaning that preserves much that a group has invented and transmitted but which also includes as necessary, defining features both an inherent indeterminacy and a predisposition to various kinds of changes or modifications." It is thus "a living and vital entity with synchronic and diachronic aspects that over time and space will experience (and partially constitute) a unified variety of receptions" (Foley 1995: xii).

vase-painter and the public who 'reads' the vase. Far from a monolithic mass slavishly transmitted from one generation to the next, tradition persists primarily because it is flexible, because it varies within limits. It thus "works like language, only more so" (proverb #1), offering a dedicated channel for communication between and among fluent participants. As a specialised register of language, it enables the transaction—whether the vehicle is an oral epic, a hybrid novel, or an amphora—because it provides a ready referent for coded language (proverb #2). Furthermore, since tradition is a constitutive property of the given work, it not only fosters composition but also guides reception (proverb #3). In order for the circuit of expression to be complete, that is, the audience must 'read' according to the same rules utilised by the composing performer, writer, or plastic artist. Thus signs function not merely as tectonic props, not merely because tradition provides a prefabricated set of materials with which to get the job done, but principally in the service of artistic communication (proverb #4). Understanding oral traditions and related forms then becomes a balancing act. By crediting the signs with their traditional values and also by meshing those implications with whatever is unique to each narrative moment or visual scene (proverb #5), we can to an extent share in the complexity of traditional art.

Traditional Implications and Signs of Orality

The title of this volume, *Signs of Orality*, cleverly plays the presumed materiality of signs off against the immaterial nature of orality, itself construed approximately as I have used the expression 'oral tradition' in this introduction. The title thus mirrors the function of *tradition* as advocated above, with a tangible, material part standing for a complex and immaterial set of implications. If the sign is "green fear", its traditional signification is "supernaturally inspired terror"; if the sign is the feast sequence, it implies a subsequent mediation of some present problem; if the sign is the story-pattern of the returning hero, then from the very start it promises to involve captivity, life-or-death challenges, disguise, testing, recognition, and a culmination triggered by the heroine.

Moreover, although the contributors to the collection have written on an unusually wide variety of classical subjects, from Greek to Roman and verbal to plastic art, their essays relate in various ways to this same expressive gambit. To put the same matter differently, we can observe that each paper focuses in one way or another on rules for traditional

composition and reception; each one advocates going beyond a simple description of a structure or pattern to ask what and how it means. From various perspectives all of the authors illustrate that the oral traditional strategies they are explaining—whatever the particular strategy and whatever the particular medium—work like a language, only more so.

In what follows I will summarise some of the salient directions taken by the authors in terms of the working model of oral tradition and related forms developed in this introduction. For the sake of economy of presentation and in the interest of emphasising the unity of the volume's multifaceted approach, I will make frequent, telegraphic reference to the almanac of proverbs listed above, citing them parenthetically and by number. In this way I hope to underline the sustained thrust and broad applicability of *Signs of Orality*.

In this respect Egbert Bakker's essay provides a paradigmatic question for the collection as a whole: "How Oral Is Oral Composition?" By problematising the most basic terms in which scholars have formulated studies in oral tradition, he awakens us to inapposite, text-centred assumptions that have too long gone unexamined and which have misdirected our understanding of the Homeric poems. As a first step, Bakker distinguishes the medium of discourse—the actual event of performance versus the object of text—from a 'conceptional' sense of oral and written. In doing so he points toward another method of avoiding the false dichotomy of orality versus literacy and makes it possible to observe, very tellingly, that ancient Greek writing, far from resembling our practice, was in fact very 'oral'. This theoretical distinction then serves as background for his consideration of Homeric poetry as speech (even if the medium of writing was involved), and to an analysis of the epics in terms of the 'intonation groups' of ordinary speech.[22] A rereading of *Iliad* 6.390-403 illustrates how the expressive system functions.

For Bakker the poetic speech of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* thus amounts to a specialised register, a variety of language—oral in conception if not unambiguously so in original medium. This register works like a language, only more so (proverb #1), and the rules for its composition must also be the rules that govern its reception (#3). Performance and tradition enable such enhanced speech (#2), which traces its ultimate source not to metrical or other formal constraints but to an artistic

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22 For an extended presentation of his approach, see Bakker (1997a).

imperative (#4). Bakker's closing remarks on the special signification of clustered violent enjambement may remind us of our double responsibility in construing traditional art (#5): we need to read between the signs (focusing on the individual moment or situation) as well as behind the signs (focusing on the expectable contribution of traditional referentiality).

Elizabeth Minchin's essay on "Describing and Narrating in Homer's *Iliad*" also offers the reader an avenue into the unique sign-system of ancient Greek epic. Here the emphasis is on the mode and strategy underlying extended descriptions of objects; although the individual passages are naturally quite disparate in their actual content, they tend to follow an idiomatic pattern within Homeric narration. With what she interprets as a cognitive regularity, Minchin shows how they follow a set format consisting of some or all of these topics: summary description (a general comment on beauty or functionality), material, workmanship, feature, size, and history. Even the *tour de force* of Achilleus' shield in *Iliad* 18, as surpassingly grand and unusual as it is in every other way, depends on the logic of this same frame.[23]

What the 'description-format' amounts to, then, is another traditional byte in the Homeric register. Like the formula, typical scene, or story-pattern (and indeed many more kinds of units and strategies[24]), it does more than serve the composing poet's need for support structures; within the specialised language, it creates a small 'map' for poet and audience alike (#1, #2, #3). No matter what the individual object, the expectable sequence guides the hearer's or reader's anticipation, fulfilling structural expectations even as it presents unfamiliar or even unprecedented objects (#5). The format is, to put it simply, a sign that encodes traditional referentiality and contributes to Homeric art (#4).

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23 On cognitive patterning in general, see Minchin (1992).

24 Especially because we are stressing the nature and dynamics of oral traditions as *languages* rather than collections of items or structures, let me add that 'formula', 'typical scene', 'story-pattern', and so on are merely convenient ways of parcelling out the resources of the traditional register. There is nothing archetypal about these or any other units, and indeed any attempt to mandate a single definition for all supposed members of any single category is doomed to failure. The variety and plasticity of traditional language is far too great to be reduced to such limited (albeit useful) models. For these reasons I advocate directing attention to the rule-governed *processes* that generate such products, rather than strictly to the products themselves (see further Foley [1990]). Of pertinence here is the concept of 'traditional morphology', which speaks to the range of variability of any given traditional unit or pattern (see further Foley [1999: Chs. 5-8]).

Another such sign is the subject of Stephen A. Nimis' "Ring-Composition and Linearity in Homer." The observation that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* exhibit annular structures—narrative figures of the concentric form A-B-C-X-C-B-A—has long been a commonplace of classical scholarship.[25] But while rings are consistently seen as a staple of Homeric style, their function in the composition and art of the epics is still a debated issue. What Nimis advocates, in concert with Bakker's approach, is to understand Homeric composition more dynamically, "viewing it as a special form of *speech* rather than as a fixed literary *text*." After a brief review of prior research on annular design, he makes the case for interpreting it as a process rather than an object, thus moving away from the assumption of a singular work and toward construing the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as products of a tradition. In his comments on the will of Zeus and other topics, he foregrounds the poems' quality of being 'under construction' or diegetic. As a result, his conception of ring-composition helps to explain the ongoingness, misdirection, and complex development of the narrative.

From the perspective of the overall concerns shared by contributors to *Signs of Orality*, Nimis' most important point may be his insistence on ring-composition as process rather than object. This critical move brings another expressive strategy into the arena of 'sign as language', stressing its role as an evocative, idiomatic force in the traditional language of the poems (#1, #2), as a *sêma* with artistic implications (#4). Of course, like any such linguistic trope, annular structure informs the reception as well as the composition of the narrative (#3), so readers will profit by learning to recognise its organisational and rhetorical function as a constitutive element of the poetry. The particular actions or events enclosed by this concentric pattern vary widely, as one might imagine; nonetheless, like Minchin's 'description-format', Nimis' process-oriented rings provide a familiar context for otherwise unique moments or series of moments. They help us read concurrently both behind and between the signs (#5).

As Ruth Scodel reminds us in "Odysseus' Evasiveness and the Audience of the *Odyssey*", that kind of stereoscopic vision is crucial for our reception of Homer's art.[26] Just as we cannot afford to assume that

[25] See esp. Stanley (1993), Minchin (1995); on ring-composition in Anglo-Saxon narrative, see Tonsfeldt (1977), Niles (1983: 152-62).

[26] On a similar subject, see Scodel (1997).

uniqueness is all, thereby ignoring the traditional implications of Homeric signs, so we cannot credit traditional referentiality with telling us—or any audience—the whole story. In recommending a balanced, dual perspective, Scodel seeks to build complexity into the character of Odysseus (always the master of trickery and indirection) and into the evolution of the narrative: "Traditional referentiality is at work, then, but the reference is not to specific details that would explain the narrative at hand, but to the essential features of a traditional character." In a similar vein, she understands the denial of expectation, as when the narrator points down one path and then takes another,[27] as indicating that specific, immediate motives and background patterns are partners in a joint proceeding.

This caveat about the necessary interaction between traditional implications and local details is extremely salutary, and deserves to be remembered as background for each and every contribution to *Signs of Orality*. On the one hand, Scodel's portrayal of Odysseus as someone the audience knows in general and in outline harmonises well with what we know about the male protagonist in the Return Song story-pattern. Not only is he the famous Odysseus of Greek myth, in other words, he is also the long-suffering, ever-wily, and opaquely incognito hero on the homeward trek. Signs from tale-type through noun-epithet phrase brand him as such (#1, #2, #3, #4).[28] But alongside these narrative signs, as she cautions, we must also make an effort to follow the character's scene-to-scene development. Focusing exclusively either on what lies behind the signs or what lies between them amounts to a fatal parochialism; Homer's art lies at the intersection (#5).[29]

Similarly, Wolfgang Kullmann's essay on "Homer and Historical Memory" urges attention to the idealisation of the relatively sparse remains of true history in the *Iliad*. Granting that we can glimpse bits of Mycenaean material culture in the epics—buildings, some bronze weap-

27 On Homeric misdirection, see Morrison (1992).

28 Cf. esp. the Return Song hero from South Slavic epic, regularly called a *sužanj nevoljniče* ("unlucky captive"). No matter what his given name may be (and the South Slavic songs present scores of both Odysseus- and Agamemnon-types), the tradition slots him *via* this formula. See further Foley (1999: Ch. 5).

29 Although Scodel's n. 13 seems to indicates otherwise, I hope to escape being grouped with those who consider "ordinary motivation and verisimilitude irrelevant". As proverb #5 was formulated to indicate, and as I have maintained in earlier (e.g. [1991], [1995]) as well as later writings (esp. [1999]), we must be duly attentive to both traditional referentiality and the local, particular details of the given work.

ons, perhaps Nestor's cup—he maintains that most of the Troy-story told by Homer must be understood as a reflection of what the poet knew from the century preceding his version of the tale. With this opinion, based on an examination of ancient Greek cultural institutions and the Catalogue of Ships, he affirms a theme that resounds throughout *Signs of Orality*, namely, the importance of the poetic tradition as a shaping and signifying force in the epics. Adducing African and other evidence to establish the point that "forms of song last much longer than their contents", Kullmann views the *Iliad* as a 'constructed history', a poet's (and tradition's) rendering of what actually happened.[30]

Poetic idealisation of the Fall of Troy saga necessarily means enlisting the aid of the Homeric register to tell it, which in turn means that the 'mixed', anachronistic reports of battle implements and techniques, for example, are normal, idiomatic features of the presentation; indeed, anything else would be unidiomatic. In that sense Kullmann's argument reinforces our proverb about oral tradition working like a language, only more so (#1), as well as other aphorisms (#2, #4).[31] In cautioning the modern reader against assuming historicity and in championing a Panhellenic context for Homer's composition and his audience's reception, he also echoes what other authors in this volume contend about the vigorous but harmonious blend of frame and enclosed contents (#4, #5).[32]

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30 It should be noted that historiographers like Louis O. Mink (e.g., [1978]) have pointed out that *any* history must appropriate a narrative paradigm in order to get told, and that we view 'our history' as an objective standard (from which others depart) only because it uses our culturally approved master-paradigms. The point is cognate with linguistic assumptions that the Homeric dialect, composed of forms and vocabulary items from different times and places, was somehow 'artificial'. If one realises that this 'mixed' dialect was the standard medium for ancient Greek epic, then the 'normal' and expectable language—with archaisms and dialect forms removed—would in fact be the artificial medium. See further Foley (1996).

31 I must take issue with Kullmann's characterisation of the South Slavic epics studied by Milman Parry and Albert Lord. As Lord made clear (1953: 16), Parry was primarily interested in the longer, more elaborate Moslem (Bosnian) epic tradition carried on principally by preliterate *guslari*, rather than the shorter Christian songs about Kosovo polje that Kullmann cites. Most of Parry's and Lord's collecting activities were therefore focused on the Moslem tradition, and the publication series they began (*Serbo-Croatian Heroic Songs*) is devoted exclusively to that primary interest; on this categorical and far-reaching difference, see Foley (1991: Ch. 3 [Moslem songs] vs. Ch. 4 [Christian songs]). In respect to the Moslem songs, it should be added that their description of 'historical' reality goes back much further than the canonical 100 years to the political realities and everyday life of the Ottoman court and greater empire (see esp. Lord [1972]; cf. Stolz [1967]), though like Homeric epic it does not amount to 'our history'.

32 For further remarks on the Panhellenic context of the Homeric poems as they have reached us, see esp. Nagy (1990: 52-81).

We cannot read the *Iliad* as history, nor should we read it as an individual fiction; it represents a situated, traditional representation 'extrapolated' (as he puts it) from a relatively few shards of objective fact.

With Michael Gagarin's contribution on "The Orality of Greek Oratory" we leave behind Homeric epic, scene of so much of the scholarly activity having to do with oral tradition over the past half-century, and enter the first of a number of fascinating new arenas for cognate studies. What Gagarin contends is that oratory written for oral performance is distinctively different from oratory written to be read. In the terms espoused in this introduction, then, he is describing two related but saliently different registers of oratory, each an effective instrument in its own right. As telltale features of oratory for oral performance he cites ten: signposts (markers that help the audience follow the argument), ring-composition, parallelism and paratactic style, brief rather than protracted antitheses, normal rather than rhetorically calculated word order, short sentences, attention-getting verbal effects, resistance toward innovation and a bias toward traditional forms of expression, lack of elaborate analysis (breaking down an argument into its components), and lack of generalisation (deriving overarching abstractions and principles from instances).

This initiative has at least three significant implications. First, Gagarin's work opens a new avenue in the scholarship on oratory even as it expands the study of oral tradition to another genre of ancient Greek verbal art. Second, his concentration on works that are written but written specifically for oral performance invites extension to numerous genres outside ancient Greece. We need more studies that expand our awareness in these two ways. Third, the features he prescribes as typical of orally performed oratory have interesting analogues in a wide variety of oral traditions and related forms world-wide and throughout history.[33] All in all, his menu of distinctive features establishes orally performed oratory as a recognisable register with endemic implications (#1, #2, #4) that demands a reception to match its composition (#3) and which encourages us to read both behind and between the signs (#5).

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[33] For example, oratorical signposts resemble the boundary lines of various oral epic traditions (Foley [1990: esp. 287-87, 295-96]); ring-composition is prevalent in Homer, South Slavic epic, and elsewhere (Nimis, this volume; Lord [1986a]; see also n. 25 above); parallelism and paratactic style abound in oral traditions (e.g. Austerlitz [1958] on Ostyak and Vogul; Reichl [1992] on various Turkic oral epic traditions); and most such registers are biased toward traditional forms of expression (e.g. Foley [1996]).

From the uniquely voiced texts of oratory, Anne Mackay, Deirdre Harrison, and Samantha Masters take us to another very promising arena, further enlarging our perspective and illustrating the explanatory power of the approach through oral tradition. Their essay, "The Bystander at the Ringside: Ring-composition in Early Greek Poetry and Athenian Black-Figure Vase-Painting", actively bridges the gap between verbal arts and plastic arts. By linking Homeric annular structure with the visual techniques of enclosure used by painters, they reveal traditional principles at work in the construction of the vase 'text'. Such rings provide a sense of order in the painted scene at the same time that they inevitably focus attention on their centres; both functions guide the perspective of the 'reader' on the presentation as a whole. In the hands of a lesser artist this technique amounts to simply following the formal outlines of the genre, a practice equivalent to generating merely metrical hexameters or counting out 14 appropriately rhymed lines in an English sonnet. But a superior, more innovative painter will use the scheme just as any gifted artist takes advantage of an idiom, that is, to "convey additional meaning through subtle variation of the traditional forms."

It must be emphasised that Mackay, Harrison, and Masters are treating a body of work that differs radically from Homeric epic, from oratory, and from the later Greek and Roman literary texts that form the coda to *Signs of Orality*. Indeed, that is precisely what makes their essay so impressive and their perspective so valuable, especially to those of us who labour exclusively in the vineyard of verbal art.[34] Very tellingly, however, and this reflects the peculiar strength of this volume as a whole, the 'rules for art' are remarkably the same even though the media are superficially disparate. As the authors encapsulate the basic insight that drives their argument, "the reading of the amphorae depends on an awareness of the underlying tradition." In other words, the ring-compositional style of black-figure vase-painting works like a language, only more so (#1); it makes inherent reference to an inexplicit but immanent tradition (#2) that is a crucial dimension of its artistic effectiveness (#4). This kind of composition naturally presupposes a linked reception (#3) that will take account of both the specific scene on the given vase and the traditional forms that assist in its portrayal (#5).

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[34] For prior work along similar lines, see Mackay (1993a), (1995), (1996a).

Niall Slater takes a related route toward reading traditional texts of plastic art in his "The Vase as Ventriloquist: *Kalos*-inscriptions and the Culture of Fame." Whatever the origin of these small celebrations of beauty in courtship of various kinds, their proliferation on late archaic vases takes them beyond the realm of personal communication and into a broader context. After considering and dispensing with prior solutions of the inscriptions as labels, signatures, and dialogue, Slater sounds the larger theme of this volume by asking us to devote more attention to reception by a wider audience in the context of an oral tradition. He interprets the *kalos*-inscriptions as, effectively, *sêmata*—signs to be voiced and heard in the ongoing manufacture of *kleos* or fame, small but evocative libretti "to create future performances."[35] Here again, as with Greek oratory, a text is written to be performed, and we understand it best when we forgo modern assumptions about the silence of (in)script(ion) and one-to-one communication between 'writer' and 'reader' in order to concentrate on restoring the lost dimension of traffic in praise that was the vase's most vital context.

Enlarging the audience and generalising the purpose of *kalos*-inscriptions opens up their traditional character as speech-acts.[36] Like Xhosa and Zulu praise-poetry, for example, they index a reputation by promulgating it publicly, by 'publishing' it within a register that conveys specialised meaning with unmatched economy and effectiveness (#1, #2). By following the stylistic rules that govern the composition and reception of this small genre (#3), the vase-painter taps into an idiom that merges art (#4) with the generation of *kleos*. Intended for performance and making institutionalised reference to an uncomplicated but apparently highly effective traditional strategy, the *kalos*-inscription slots a particular individual in a familiar posture and category. He becomes known and celebrated not only for his singularity but because the praise accorded him is recognisably idiomatic: in a word, his idiosyncratic fame is supported by a traditional sign (#5).

As we learn more and more about the complex interactions between writing and oral performance in the ancient world, we come to realise how nuanced an analysis is needed to unlock the expressive dynamics of

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[35] Slater quotes Svenbro's lapidary evaluation of the more general object and process: "The inscription is a machine for producing *kleos*" (1993: 2).

[36] For *sêmata* as speech-acts, see Foley (1999), where the inscription on Bellerophon's tablet (*Iliad* 6) is interpreted as a traditional sign.

many different genres and speech-acts. Harold Tarrant's "Dialogue and Orality in a Post-Platonic Age" furnishes an excellent example of what can be uncovered about the traditional art of a written text if we are patient enough to probe its depths with an open mind, moving beyond the usual presumptions about literary modelling and authorial influence. Concentrating on Plutarch and Lucian, Tarrant poses a difficult and incisive question: does a writer of later dialogues "imitate Plato, theoretical archetypes, or life as he saw it?" His suitably complex answer avoids reductionism by placing Plutarch as much in his contemporary intellectual circle as in debt to Platonic dialogue. Lucian, on the other hand, emerges more as an oral performer whose dialogues have roots in storytelling. While Plutarch's intended audience consisted of intellectual compatriots addressed privately, Lucian's more public and heterogeneous milieux (not all of them having the same relation to oral performance) reflected the experimentation he undertook with both spoken and written words.

This description of intended modes and audiences recalls Bakker's distinction between medium and conception as well as Gagarin's notion of the two registers of Greek oratory, the one written to be read and the other written to be performed. In peeling away the layers of textual bias that moderns necessarily bring to the evaluation of such works, Tarrant is identifying 'signs' that engage the resources of tradition (#1, #2) in summoning particular kinds of voices. While dialogues depend upon generic models to varying degrees, they also mirror the storytelling and dramatisation typical of Homer and other works, as well as of the activities of the contemporary educated community. In their different ways Plutarch and Lucian are attempting to make their audiences hear their art (#4), using rhetorical devices in composition that would translate to the reception they were aiming at (#3). Even within this learned genre, with its written history and magisterial models, then, signs of orality are ever audible (#5).

Something quite analogous can be said about elaborate literary texts from Rome, as Elaine Fantham reminds us in her "Two Levels of Orality in the Genesis of Pliny's *Panegyricus*."[37] She begins by sketching the medial lineage and contemporary context of this and other written creations: the legacy of improvisation from Greece, the role of impro-

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[37] Thanks are due to my colleague, Daniel Hooley, for his assistance with contextualising this essay.

vised declamation in Augustan-era rhetorical training, and the widespread practice of recitation in the age of Statius, Martial, and Pliny. Given that so much of textual commerce was actually accomplished through oral performance, it is perhaps not surprising that Pliny himself distinguished various phases of publication, from the initial oral recitation (*actio*) and a second recitation to friends, on to actual written promulgation. Beyond even this evolutionary trajectory, Fantham highlights the traditional oral nature of the *Panegyricus*—especially its formulaic, ritual utterances—as an expressive dynamic important to the overall interpretation of Pliny's remarks. Aware of the tension between oral and written (or traditional and situational, as advocated in this introduction), she argues, he is manipulating a composite medium for optimum rhetorical and political effect.

In the terms we have been developing, Pliny's method represents a clear example of the stereoscopic, two-level reception suggested by the proverb "Read both behind and between the signs" (#5). The local, situational aspect of the *Panegyricus* is presumably self-evident, having the been the exclusive target of scholarship to date, and needs no further comment here. But the other half of the proverb does require our attention here. For ignoring either the sequence of publication media or the implications of ritual utterance must leaven the *Panegyricus* to merely a text; important rhetorical advantages that the author himself recognised and described will fall by the wayside and a partial reading will result. Hearing a voice—or 'hearing' the signs—amounts to understanding the nature and function of the traditional register embedded in this meticulously wrought literary creation (#1, #2). Only via a suitably complex reception, mandated by the inherent complexities of composition (#3), can we appreciate fully the art of Pliny's *Panegyricus* (#4).

Merritt Sale's study of "Virgil's Formularity and *Pius Aeneas*" provides a fitting and satisfying closure to *Signs of Orality*. Far at the other end of the spectrum from the oral-derived poems of Homer and his epic tradition, the *Aeneid* is in salient ways everything that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are not. For one example, the Roman epic is known to be wrought by a single individual, without doubt a historical personage.[38] For another, it apparently patterns itself on prior texts rather than emerges from

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[38] On Homer's identity as a legendary singer and thus as more an anthropomorphisation of the epic tradition than an *anthrôpos* (with analogues in South Slavic and Mongolian), see Foley (1998c).

an epic tradition. Most importantly for the purposes of this volume, its author is in no way an 'oral poet'. Nonetheless, as is shown in the full technical detail that Sale's argument demands, Virgil is a formulaic poet.[39] How is this unexpected combination to be explained, especially since so many scholars have indissolubly linked formularity and oral tradition as part of their operative theories or working assumptions?[40] Why did Virgil go to the considerable trouble of training himself in this technique of composition? Why did he want to "sound like Homer"?

Sale's remarkable and brilliant answer is that Virgil was implying the dynamics and resources of an indigenous epic tradition parallel to the Greek tradition he was imitating. With the considerable poetic, rhetorical, and (not incidentally) political and historical weight of such a referent putatively supporting his *Aeneid*, this formulaic Roman bard could say: "as Homer stands towards the events of the heroic age that he narrates, so I stand towards those I sing of; as he tells the truth, so do I." No matter that the implied tradition never did exist—not in Latin, at any rate. The crucial matter is that Virgil's adopted style and his appropriation of Homer effectively created it. He too was a master of sign-language.

Epitomising the revisionist perspective of the entire volume, then, Sale's argument demonstrates how a learned, writing poet could harness the expressive power of traditional referentiality. The register of Virgil's unique text indeed "works like a language, only more so" (#1) and makes necessary reference to an implied tradition (#2). Thus the *Aeneid*'s success as verbal art depends in part on its formulaic structure (#4), which is anything but limiting or unimaginative.[41] That structure—and other traditional patterns as well—demands a reception attuned to Virgil's own creative and socio-political agenda (#3). Finally, our poet's imitation not simply of Homer's *content* but just as crucially of his and

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39 For related studies of formularity and its implications for poetic composition in various traditions, see Sale (1989), (1993), (1996b), (1996c).

40 This was of course Parry's initial and continuing assumption (esp. [1928a], [1928b], [1930]), carried on by Lord ([1960]; but cf. his modified position in [1986b]) and translated to other traditions (e.g. the seminal effect of Magoun [1953], discussed in Olsen [1986], [1988]). Sale's contribution to this volume helps illustrate how formulaic structure is a feature of a register, a language for communication, and not merely an index of dependence on oral composition-in-performance (see further Foley [1995], [1999]).

41 As Sale puts it, "each time a basic formula is used, the whole of a traditional figure is summoned to the audience's ear; therefore every occurrence of *pius Aeneas* offers us not only his *pietas*, but his other qualities, and especially the quality, referred to by the formula *pater Aeneas*, that gives *pietas* its external form."

his tradition's *method* points toward the two-levelled, stereoscopic response that we have found to be an operating principle in all of the different genres and media examined in *Signs of Orality* (#5), regardless of whether they stem directly from oral traditions or translate the characteristic expressive principles to a textual medium. We are asked to read between the signs, co-celebrating the unmatched glories of Rome from her origins onward, and we are also asked to read behind the signs, placing Virgil and his singular creation in the storied lineage of Homer and his tradition.

CHAPTER ONE

HOW ORAL IS ORAL COMPOSITION?

Egbert J. Bakker

The central concern in this contribution is a question of perspective.[1] I will address the question that, I believe, should be at the centre of the study of orality and of oral poetry: the question of orality itself. What does it mean for a poem or a poetic tradition to be oral? What is oral style? And, finally, the most basic question: what exactly does 'oral' mean? I start from this last question, and hope to deal with it in such a way that answers to the earlier ones suggest themselves in due course.

Terms and Perspectives

We usually see 'oral' in opposition to 'literate', 'orality' to 'literacy'. We sometimes speak of 'oral' *versus* 'literate', meaning that somehow the two terms exclude each other. But sometimes we imply that the two may coexist. So it seems that our usage of the very term 'oral' and its abstract 'orality' needs some clarification. What exactly does 'oral' mean and in what senses do we use the term? A first sense naturally presents itself in the observation that a discourse may be either read or listened to. In the latter case, we say that it is delivered orally. The term 'oral' here applies to the way in which we use language, by speaking or writing. A more precise term might be simply 'spoken', as a name for one possible *medium* for our discourse.[2] In this sense of 'spoken', we can oppose 'oral' to 'written', in order to bring out the straightforward difference between the human voice on the one hand and the graphic display of characters on the written or printed page on the other.

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[1] Most of the issues addressed in this paper are dealt with in greater detail in Bakker (1997a).

[2] See Koch & Oesterreicher (1985: 15-43); Oesterreicher (1993: 265-90); Oesterreicher (1997); see also Bakker (1997a: 7-9); Bakker (1997b: 287-8).

The situation becomes more complicated when we turn to another sense of 'oral', and I believe it is very important to acknowledge it as a different sense. Speaking and writing are different media for using language, but the difference goes much deeper than the simple difference between phonemes and graphemes. Speaking and writing are different activities that call for different strategies in the presentation and comprehension of a discourse. When we address listeners in an actual speech situation, we obviously use our language differently from when we address our absent readers in our books and articles. So each medium, speech and writing, comes with its own set of associations, and even its own mentality. To bring out this aspect, we might speak of 'oral' as the *conception* that underlies a discourse, and oppose this quality not to 'written' but to 'literate'.[3]

The conceptional sense of 'oral' has to be distinguished from the medial one. To begin with, we note that both terms may not apply at the same time. A given discourse may be oral as to its conception, but written as to its medium: it has been written down, but does not display the features that we normally associate with written discourse.[4] Conversely, a discourse may be written, i.e., literate, as to its conception and oral ('spoken') as to its medium. This often happens in the oral presentation of academic papers, when the author has not succeeded in hiding the 'writtenness' of the discourse in question.

But the difference between the medial and the conceptional senses of 'oral' goes deeper than this. As a medium, 'oral' excludes 'written' in the sense that at the moment of its reception a discourse usually cannot be both spoken and written at the same time: it has to be either phonic or graphic. In the conceptional sense, on the other hand, the relation between 'oral' and its opposite is quite different. 'Oral' and 'literate' can here be seen as the two poles or extremes of a continuum, with numerous gradations in between. On the one extreme, a discourse is maximally 'oral', making full, and necessary, use of the requirements of the spoken medium; on the other extreme a discourse is maximally literate, written according to the requirements of the written medium in the culture at hand. In practice, most discourses will display both oral and liter-

[3] See the references mentioned in the previous note.

[4] For more on written discourses that are conceptionally oral, see Oesterreicher (1997).

ate features in varying ratios, being situated at some point between the two extremes.

An important consequence of the conceptional understanding of 'oral' is not only that the orality of a discourse is perfectly compatible with writing; equally important, especially for the study of how oral traditions are recorded, is that the very notion of writing is sensitive to the new understanding of 'oral'. Often we talk about writing as if this is a monolithic concept, but in reality writing runs the gamut of the whole oral-literate continuum. The conception of a text is indissolubly connected with the conception of its writing. Before I elaborate on this statement, let me display graphically the parallelism of the two continua:

The conception of language and of writing as parallel continua:	
conception of a discourse:	oral ⟵——————⟶ literate
conception of its writing:	transcription ⟵——————⟶ composition

In the first continuum, we see 'oral' and 'literate' as extremes, end points defining the nature of the space in between. The second continuum specifies what happens when the written medium enters the picture; the continuum is the space between the writing of a conceptionally oral discourse, here termed transcription, and the writing of a conceptionally literate discourse, termed composition. The latter extreme constitutes writing in our culture's understanding of the concept. When we speak of writing a book, an article, a letter, or even a sentence, we usually mean that we are *composing* the text in question, the physical act of writing being taken for granted, and increasingly not occurring at all, as in the case of the present text, which was composed and keyboarded by its author at the computer screen. Toward the left-hand extreme, on the other hand, the physical act of writing is at the centre of the conception. Writing here is to be understood not as composing or creating a discourse, but as *transcribing* it. The act of writing transcodes a discourse into the opposite medium, and as a translation of phonemes heard into graphemes seen it has little to do with the composition of the discourse

in question. In other words, the composition of such a text takes place independently from its writing, and precedes that act in time.[5]

We see, then, that writing is a gradient affair, just as is orality itself. The conception of writing as a continuum has implications in various dimensions. Sociologically, it runs across the members of a language community: some people simply have a better command of the requirements of the written medium than do others. But for my purpose in this contribution, other dimensions are more important. Historically, the left-hand extreme of transcription can be seen as the moment when writing first enters a society, a moment that is different indeed from the point we have reached to date in the age of computers and the Internet.[6] Finally, insofar as the first discourses committed to writing *actually existed*, independently from the act of writing, we may also see the historical scale as one of increasing *fictionalisation*: the further we move to the right, the less likely it is that any actual spoken discourse preceded the text in time. Writing in our modern sense of composition fictionalises the speech act, inventing a textual voice that in the written reception of the text has to function as the substitute of the absent author's actual voice.[7] No such fictionalisation occurs on the left-hand side of the scale, and we had better study these conceptionally oral texts not as text but as the speech that led to their existence.

And here we run into a curious problem. I have distinguished between two senses and understandings of the concept of 'oral'. In the medial sense, it is easy to think of a binary opposition between speech and writing that is *neutral*. We either speak or write, either listen or read. In the conceptional sense, on the other hand, matters are more

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[5] Oesterreicher (1993) captures the difference meant here with the terminological distinction between *Verschriftung* (textification) and *Verschriftlichung* (textualization), the former applying to the shift in medium and the latter to the gradual change in conception of a discourse or discourse tradition, whereby 'writtenness' plays an increasingly important role in its transmission and reception.

[6] Being one of those whose writing habits were decisively influenced by the introduction of the personal computer in the 1980s, I have been able to witness in my own practice a phenomenon comparable to the writing continuum mentioned: at first I used my computer to transcribe text that I had already composed independently of the new medium, but later found it increasingly convenient to compose my texts at the screen, to the point at which no actual writing occurred any more. The fact that we still speak of 'writing' here testifies to the tendency of each new medium to fictionalise the previous one. See also the text.

[7] On the fictionality of written texts, see, e.g. Ong (1982: 102-3); on fictionality in connection with the distinction between medium and conception discussed here, see Bakker 1997c).

complicated, because here the opposition is not so neutral anymore. We now endow the terms 'oral' and 'literate' with a cultural value. So we speak of 'oral poetry', not to characterise a given poem as spoken (when it is read aloud), but to define it with respect to poetry as we know it in our culture. Similarly, we speak of 'orality', not to describe what happens when someone talks, but to label a period or a culture as different with respect to our own, literate culture. And most importantly, we tend to consider conceptionally oral texts as crude or primitive, simply because we use our own sense and conception of writing as a norm.

I believe that it is very important to be aware that not only the spoken medium of language, but also the spoken conception is a phenomenon that deserves to be studied in its own right and on its own terms, rather than from the point of view of writing. When we present a spoken discourse, with its oral conception, as text, we tend to think of that text as 'primitive' or, in another context, as 'archaic', without realising that when we talk ourselves, our own discourse, when transcribed and presented in written form, may look very similar. The discourse was never meant to be read in our understanding of that concept, and looks primitive only because we subject it to the reception conditions of the written medium. Conversely, a conceptionally written discourse presented as speech will in most cases be equally unsuccessful, because the rhetoric of its writtenness is not adjusted to an ordinary speech situation.

This leads us to the conclusion that the use of the terms 'oral' and 'orality' can often not be separated from our own literate perspective. Instead of constituting a neutral contrast with 'literate' and 'literacy', they are 'the other member' in a contrastive pair orality-literacy, in which we align ourselves with the literate member. In this sense 'oral' and 'orality' are bound up with literate culture. They denote a lack of the literate conception of language, and so define speech as the construction of a writing culture that uses its own absence to define its opposite. As a further illustration, let us imagine a society in which writing, in whatever form or importance, is totally absent. In such a society poets may well exist, but in the absence of literate poets they are not oral poets. Nor have people an oral style in this society, for the simple reason that there is no literate style with which to compare their speech. The perspectival bias inherent in the term 'oral' is similar to that in 'natural' as applied to food in a society of hunters and gatherers. These terms presuppose their opposite, and are meaningful only in a situation in which the opposite is the norm.

How Oral is Oral Composition?

Let us now proceed by looking at Homeric poetry against this background, and let us start with the orality-hypothesis, the theory of oral composition proposed by Milman Parry and given an authoritative and influential form in Albert Lord's *The Singer of Tales*. I do not want to detract from the brilliance of Parry's original insights, nor from the importance of *The Singer of Tales* in opening up vast areas of fruitful research, and in serving as a powerful heuristic guide in the study of traditional epic poetry. But I do believe we act in the spirit of Parry's pioneering work when we test his findings against subsequent developments in the study of oral poetry and spoken language, and adjust or modify them when necessary. In particular, I would like to assess the notion of oral composition within the framework that I have tried to sketch.

The concept of oral composition has been central in the discussion of Homer in the wake of Parry's and Lord's arguments. Lord thought of oral and written composition as mutually exclusive:

> The written technique (. . .) is not compatible with the oral technique, and the two could not possibly combine, to form another, a third, a 'transitional' technique. It is conceivable that a man might be an oral poet in his younger years and a written poet in later life, but it is not possible that he be both an oral and a written poet at any given time in his career. The two by their very nature are mutually exclusive.

And again:

> The oral singer thinks in terms of (. . .) formulas and formula patterns. He *must* do so in order to compose. But when writing enters, the 'must' is eliminated.[8]

For Lord, oral composition was the ultimate criterion on which the orality of oral poetry depended, and he transferred the results of his fieldwork on the South Slavic *guslars* to Homer. In order for Homer to be oral poetry, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* had to be orally composed. If one doubts the orality hypothesis or tries to weaken it, one loses Homer as oral poetry. This inflexible position is reflected in the subsequent scholarly discussion, where we see Homerists divided into two segregated camps, the oralists and the scripsists, with oralists coming sometimes

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[8] Lord (1960: 129, 130).

close to minimising and trivialising the role of the Homeric text, and scripsists assuming that the mere existence of that text is a green light for unreflective literate and literary study of Homer.

I believe that both positions are anachronistic and ill-taken, the oralist position in principle no less than the scripsist position. My previous discussion of the two senses of 'oral' might help us see how both positions ask the wrong questions and seek the wrong answers. In fact, Lord's very notion of 'oral composition' amounts to a conflation of the two senses discussed. The idea of oral and literate composition as mutually exclusive is in line with the medial understanding of orality, in which a discourse is either spoken or written, not both. But we saw that in the conceptional sense 'oral' is a gradient property that is not at all incompatible with writing, provided we are prepared to accept that our own conception of writing is narrow, and highly culture-dependent. Relativism as regards writing, however, is not to be found in the work of Lord and other early oralists, who have consistently assumed that writing inevitably sooner or later kills off an oral tradition and the capabilities of the oral poets.[9] The anachronism of such a position is obvious in light of the growing historical awareness as regards writing and written communication: our conception of writing is not a norm for other times and cultures, and certainly not for the Greek situation in the seventh or sixth centuries BC. If we use the Middle Ages as comparative evidence, we notice that such things as 'writing' and 'reading' in cultures other than our own can be surprisingly 'oral', in the sense that the human voice and ear play an important role.[10]

So I would be prepared to propose that writing played a role in the composition of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. But this writing was far removed indeed from writing in our sense of 'written composition', and has to be situated at the left-hand extreme of the scale mentioned above. Even though the Homeric text as it was first written—a text that is surely very different from our received text[11]—cannot have been an exact transcript of an oral performance, its conception was, and remained, profoundly oral. And the medium of Homeric poetry remained oral too, for the simple reason that *performance*, and not silent reading, remained

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9 See, e. g., Kirk (1985: 15-16).
10 See in particular the important study of Clanchy (1979).
11 See also Bakker (1997a: 207-10).

the only medium of presentation of Homeric poetry until well in the classical period.[12]

I want to stress that this position as regards Homer and writing does not mean that I see the Homeric text as 'post-oral', as many have done, or as transitional between orality and literacy, or some such qualification. To see Homeric poetry as somewhere 'in between' orality and literacy would still be to view orality and literacy as two atomic, mutually exclusive opposites. My point is rather that writing in the Greek archaic period must have been so different from our notion of writing, so 'oral', in fact, that the simple dichotomy between orality and literacy breaks down.

This leads me to a further characteristic feature of the position of Lord that becomes apparent in the light of the discussion on perspectives earlier in this paper: the notion of oral composition is an unmistakably literate notion. In itself there is nothing wrong with literate notions, of course—they are quite inevitable among literate scholars—but it does not hurt to be aware of their literateness. Oral composition presupposes an oral style as opposed to a literate style, but, as we already saw, the very notion of 'oral style' betrays the perspectival bias of the literate classicist. 'Oral style' presupposes 'literate style' in the same way that 'archaic style' presupposes 'classical style', or 'paratactic style' presupposes 'hypotactic style', and so on: the oral nature of this style is of our own making, and defined with respect to literate style in the black-and-white contrast that I have already argued against.

The basic ingredient of this oral style, and according to Parry and Lord the necessary condition for oral composition, was of course the formula. The formula was defined as a kind of repetition that was metrically useful, if not necessary, in the oral composition of the epic story. Again the binary contrast with written style is apparent: written style does not display this kind of repetition, because the composition of the written text is not dependent on it. In its non-formulaicness, written style functions as perspective, even as norm, in the definition of oral style, and of the formula as its prime criterion. Language, we seem to assume, is non-repetitive and 'original' by default.

We may also note—and this will become important later on in this chapter—that the same principle, but now in reversed form, applies to

[12] On performance and transmission of Homeric poetry beyond the archaic period, see Nagy (1996).

enjambement. Whereas the formula could be seen as a prime feature of the oral style (so that there should not be too few formulae in a text if it is to be oral), enjambement was seen as a feature of written style, so that there should not be too many cases of enjambement in a style that was supposed to be oral. Accordingly, the relative frequency of these two features has been a major issue in oral-formulaic theory.[13]

Homeric Discourse as Speech

At this point I may have to forestall a possible misunderstanding. The contention is not that Homer does not have formulae. Rather, I am suggesting that we have to be aware of the perspective involved in defining them. The presence of formulae in Homer is of course undeniable, and so is the metrical function assigned to them by Parry (though I would give priority to their *meaning* as recurrent speech rituals in the performance).[14] But more important for my present purpose is the direction from which they are approached: not from the point of view of literate style, but from the point of view of speech.

I have already argued that we have to be very careful in imposing our own culturally dependent conception of writing and written style on texts and discourses that are different. This means that we may have to pay attention to the oral conception of language for its own sake. In other words, we have to ask what it means for language to be spoken. I think this is a very important question for the study of oral traditions, whether they are written (textualised) or not. And when they turned themselves into text, and we have to study them as text, we have to be very careful with applying concepts and assumptions deriving from our own written conception of language.

An awareness of the oral conception of language and its specific features may lead us to a study of Homeric poetry as speech, language as it is spoken, not written, and freed from the preconceptions of written style and composition. Such an analysis does not aim at a simple equation of Homeric discourse and *ordinary* speech. On the contrary, Homer

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[13] See Lord (1960: 130-1) on formula and enjambement in this respect as criteria for 'orality tests'. See also the practice of establishing formula density in oral texts: Lord (1960: 142-4); Parry (1971: 301-12). Enjambement has often been the subject of statistical analysis, e.g. Parry (1971: 254); Higbie (1990: 82-6).

[14] See Bakker (1997a: 159-83); see also J. M. Foley in numerous publications, e.g. (1995: 2-7).

is highly stylised, artful speech, rhythmically very sophisticated, and semantically much more focused and powerful than ordinary spoken narrative could ever be. Still, the basic parameters for the study of this idiom are not essentially different from those of the study of speech in general. One might speak of 'special speech' in an effort to replace 'oral poetry' with terminology less reflecting the perspective of the literate researcher. Special speech in an anthropological perspective is the discourse in which a community asserts its identity in establishing links with a meaningful, heroic past, or with a spiritual *au-delà*.[15] Such discourse is obviously different from what ordinary people say in ordinary situations, yet it will draw for its effect on whatever feature of the language in question is most prominent. In the case of the Homeric tradition, I argue, this stylisation of ordinary speech results in metre and formulae as the prime feature of the discourse of the epic performance.

Formulae, the basic units of special speech, seen as the stylisation of ordinary speech, reveal an instructive aspect of the confrontation of the written with the oral conception of language. Of what are formulae the stylisation? The basic unit of language is usually thought of as the sentence. Yet this concept, and especially our understanding of it, is a matter of the written conception of language. By this I do not mean that sentences are confined to discourse with a written conception, and that speech does not have them. In spoken language, sentences obviously occur too, but the difference with written language is that in speech the sentence is not a *norm*. In other words, a written discourse in our sense is badly flawed when it does not attain acceptable sentential syntax; a spoken discourse, on the other hand, may still work when its speaker does *not* arrive at sentential structure. In fact, such a structure may well not be in the speaker's interests at all: it may be too complex to grasp by someone who has to listen on the spot, and who cannot review the construction in its entirety on the printed page. Such a discourse might look awkward in writing, but, as described earlier, this may have more to do with medial mismatch (the one medium subjected to the reception conditions of the other) than with any lack of 'quality' of the discourse in question.

Instead of the sentence there appears to be another unit that is of more direct relevance for the study of spoken discourse in any language.

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[15] For the idea of speech as marked, as opposed to the unmarked speech of everyday, see in particular Nagy (1990: 30-40).

This is what has been called in linguistics the idea unit, or tone group, or intonation unit, or some such characterisation. This kind of unit is usually four to seven words long; it can be a complete syntactic unit, such as a clause, but it can also be something that needs to be complemented to make sense syntactically; and in spoken language it is marked by intonational boundaries, and often by pauses. The linguist who has most widely written and published on the intonation unit is Wallace Chafe.[16] Chafe adds a psychological, cognitive dimension to this feature of spoken language, by linking the intonation unit to such human faculties as consciousness, memory, and perception. An intonation unit, as Chafe argues, is the verbalisation of the amount of information that can be held in what cognitive psychologists call the working memory, or short term memory, or what Chafe himself calls the focus of consciousness. In this way the intonation unit becomes the basic element of speech as a flow through time. Both the speaker and the listener have to produce and process the discourse on the spot in a temporal flow in which returning or looking back is impossible. In this way they are left to the resources and limitations of their cognitive makeup.

Now the intonation unit is not only a universal manifestation in speech of the workings of human consciousness; it is also the point of departure for any enhancement of speech in the form of oral traditions. The intonational and prosodic properties of the unit can be *stylised* into *metrical* properties; and their cognitively determined length makes them the ideal basis for formulas as the basic ingredients of epic discourse. In other words, the intonation units of ordinary speech become the metrical units of special, poetic speech.[17] I propose, then, that it is the intonation unit of spoken language that lies at the basis of essential aspects of Homeric style, such as the very concept of formula, as well as of parataxis and colometry. As an example, I cite the passage describing the first appearance of Andromache in the *Iliad*:

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[16] See most recently and fully, Chafe (1994). Intonation units introduced and defined on p. 53; sentence discussed on pp. 139-44. See also Bakker (1997a: 44-53), and the earlier discussions in Bakker (1997b), as well as Bakker (1990: 1-21) and (1993b: 1-29).

[17] On this relation between speech and (Homeric) special speech, see Bakker (1997a: 146-55).

a. Ἦ ῥα γυνὴ ταμίη,	so she spoke, woman housekeeper,
b. ὁ δ' ἀπέσσυτο δώματος Ἕκτωρ	and he, he rushed from the house, Hektor,
c. τὴν αὐτὴν ὁδὸν αὖτις	the same way again
d. ἐϋκτιμένας κατ' ἀγυιάς.	along the well-built streets.
e. εὖτε πύλας ἵκανε	when he reached the gates
f. διερχόμενος μέγα ἄστυ	going through the great city,
g. Σκαιάς,	the Skaian <gates>,
h. τῇ ἄρ' ἔμελλε	thereby he was to be
i. διεξίμεναι πεδίονδε,	going out into the plain,
j. ἔνθ' ἄλοχος πολύδωρος	there his richly dowered wife,
k. ἐναντίη ἦλθε θέουσα	she came running to meet him,
l. Ἀνδρομάχη,	Andromache,
m. θυγάτηρ μεγαλήτορος Ἠετίωνος,	daughter of great-hearted Eëtion,
n. Ἠετίων, ὃς ἔναιεν	Eëtion who lived
o. ὑπὸ Πλάκῳ ὑληέσσῃ,	under Plakos rich in woods,
p. Θήβῃ Ὑποπλακίῃ,	in Thebe below Plakos,
q. Κιλίκεσσ' ἄνδρεσσιν ἀνάσσων·	lord of the Kilikian people:
r. τοῦ περ δὴ θυγάτηρ	of him then the daughter,
s. ἔχεθ' Ἕκτορι χαλκοκορυστῇ.	she was held by Hektor of the bronze helm.
t. ἥ οἱ ἔπειτ' ἤντησ',	<it was her> who came to meet him then,
u. ἅμα δ' ἀμφίπολος κίεν αὐτῇ	and a maid came with her,
v. παῖδ' ἐπὶ κόλπῳ ἔχουσ'	holding a child on her bosom,
w. ἀταλάφρονα, νήπιον αὔτως,	tender-minded, just a baby,
x. Ἑκτορίδην ἀγαπητόν,	cherished son of Hektor,
y. ἀλίγκιον ἀστέρι καλῷ,	similar to a beautiful star,
z. τόν ῥ' Ἕκτωρ καλέεσκε Σκαμάνδριον	him Hektor used to call Skamandrios,
a'. αὐτὰρ οἱ ἄλλοι Ἀστυάνακτ'·	but the others Astyanax
b'. οἶος γὰρ ἐρύετο Ἴλιον Ἕκτωρ.	for on his own he defended Ilion, Hektor.

(*Il.* 6.390-403)

The *OCT*[18] prints this passage as three sentences, one comprising my units a-d, the second one e-s, and the third one t-b'. This punctuation is to some extent arbitrary, however, in view of the fact that sentence breaks are equally possible after units a, i, t, or y. Moreover, the break after s, the end of the second *OCT* sentence, is unclear, and depends on whether we take ἥ in unit t as a relative or as a demonstrative pronoun. But such a grammatical distinction is one of our own making and is often irrelevant for Homeric discourse (notice also units h and r in this regard); here it serves as a questionable basis for punctuation. Although the full stops we print in our Homer texts may seem unquestionable and felicitous in many other cases, they remain attempts at accommodating Homeric discourse to the requirements of the written medium in *our* conception.

Of more direct relevance for the analysis of Homeric poetry are the units into which the passage naturally divides. Most of these units coincide with the hemistichs of the hexameter, comparable in length and duration to the intonation units that are observable in ordinary speech. To be sure, this speech analysis does *not* mean that I see the passage as improvised, or orally composed in the sense of Parry and Lord. We will never know how close the passage is to the textless performance of the singer of tales—perhaps less close than we would like it to be. All we know is that the *text* of the passage is characterised by a thoroughly oral conception, and so very far removed from our conception of a written text.

Instead of sentential arrangements, we see a relation of addition between units: each unit builds on the other in an ongoing flow of incoming detail.[19] Straightforward examples of such adding units include prepositional phrases (e.g., d), locative expressions (p), participial phrases (q), proper names (l), and qualifying adjectives (w, x, and y). This appositional nature of Homeric syntax has been often observed, in particular by Parry's teacher, Antoine Meillet. Meillet, the Indo-Europeanist, observed that Homeric Greek, like other older Indo-European languages, is characterised by a pervasive tendency for words and phrases to be autonomous, not governed by other constituents in the sentence.[20]

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[18] Oxford Classical Text: Allen & Monro (1920).

[19] For more detail on the syntax of intonation units in Homeric discourse, see Bakker (1997a: chs. 4 and 5).

[20] See Meillet and Vendryes (1937: 598-99). See also Bakker (1997a: 96-97).

Meillet opposes this relation of 'apposition' of Homeric Greek and Proto-Indo-European to the more hierarchical relation of 'rection' of modern languages such as English or French, where linguistic elements tend to be governed by one another.

Now it is true that there is a syntactic, typological difference between English or French on the one hand and Ancient Greek on the other, but I suspect that the confrontation of the written with the oral conception of language plays a role too. To take a simple example, in the sentence *Peter gave the book to John*, there are three nouns ('Peter', 'the book', and 'John') that are governed and held together by the verb 'gave'. In Indo-European, according to Meillet's reasoning, such noun phrases would be much more independent, and we would get such configurations as *Peter, he gave it to John, the book* or *The book, Peter gave it to John.* But a sentence like *Peter gave the book to John*, in which one single verb governs no less than three substantives, would be very unlikely to occur in spoken English or French, too, as it is produced by actual speakers in natural situations.[21] The information that it contains would be preferably broken down into two or more intonation units that resemble Meillet's autonomous phrases. It seems natural, then, to assume that speech syntax *vis-à-vis* Meillet's own literate conception of language has played a role in the formulation of the Indo-European appositional construction.

We can now consider units j-k and r-s in the passage above in the same way:

j. ἔνθ' ἄλοχος πολύδωρος	there his richly dowered wife,
k. ἐναντίη ἦλθε θέουσα	she came running to meet him,
r. τοῦ περ δὴ θυγάτηρ	of him then the daughter,
s. ἔχεθ' Ἕκτορι χαλκοκορυστῇ.	she was held by Hektor of the bronze helm.

Units k and s are complete clauses; their verbs ἦλθε and ἔχετο do not need ἄλοχος and θυγάτηρ to be syntactically complete. So under this analysis, the nominative substantives in units j and r are *not* the subject

21 Chafe (1994: 108-19). Chafe speaks of the "one new idea constraint": when an utterance contains more information than can be held in a speaker's focal consciousness at one time, it will be typically broken down into units containing one idea each.

of their verb. In Meillet's terms, these substantives are autonomous elements related by way of syntactic *agreement* to the subsequent discourse; in my terminology, the substantives are part of a separate unit, filling its own half of the verse, and preceding its clause.

Terms such as 'addition' or 'apposition' might easily imply the idea that the progression of Homeric discourse is a random affair. But it is not. The notion of a flow of discourse in which the speaker leaps from idea to idea does not mean to imply that there is no planned organization. A spoken discourse may be different from a written discourse in its structure and organization, but it is organised all the same. An important aspect of it can be captured by the notion of *goal* or *preview*.[22] In spoken discourse, something can be said, not as information in its own right, but with an eye on a situation to be reached in due course: a detail may be stated in order to be explained, which will lead the listener to a goal that was indicated earlier. Such a preliminary indication occurs at unit m in our passage: the identification of Andromache as the daughter of Eëtion. Unit n, which takes up the name of Eëtion as starting point for information about his dwelling place, is not a digression that leads the narrative off the track. Eëtion's identity is crucial for that of Andromache,[23] and instead of being a piece of gratuitous detail, unit m looks ahead at r, the moment when Andromache returns in the discourse, now fully contextualised and identified. This moment is formally marked as previewed by the repetition of θυγάτηρ, just as ἤντησ' two units later (t) takes up ἐναντίη ἦλθε (unit k) to mark the final transition from Andromache's relevant identity to her actual appearance on the scene. This is ring-composition, of course, but I would stress that this phenomenon is less a feature of oral or archaic style than a naturally occurring phenomenon in the presentation of speech.[24]

Intonation Units and Enjambement

Since Homeric speech units are stylised speech units, it is impossible to ignore their metrical dimension, in particular their relation to the verse as a rhythmical unity. This leads us naturally to the notion of *en-*

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22 Bakker (1997a: 100-21).

23 See also *Il.* 6.414-28.

24 On ring-composition, see Minchin (1995: 23-35). See also the contribution of Nimis to this volume as well as Bakker (1997a: 115-21).

jambement. This term surely denotes an important feature of Homeric style and poetry, but to the extent that 'sentence' figures in its definition (enjambement being the mismatch of sentence and verse) we have to be prepared, again, to acknowledge that our own literate conception of language and texts may be involved. I propose, then, to view enjambement in terms of the basic units that make up Homeric discourse, rather than in terms of the sentences that we impose on it.

Let us first return to the appearance of Andromache. For most of this passage, units end either at the middle caesura or at the end of the verse, occupying one half-line. Parry called this 'unperiodic enjambement', the situation where verse end coincides with a sense break though not with the end of a sentence.[25] To the extent, however, that sense breaks, cognitively defined, are more pertinent to the flow of the passage than any punctuation on our part, we might want to withdraw the term 'enjambement' altogether for such situations.[26] Sometimes, however, matters are more complicated, as in the case of units z and a':

z. || τόν ῥ' Ἕκτωρ καλέεσκε Σκαμάνδριον	him Hektor used to call Skamandrios,
a'. αὐτὰρ οἱ ἄλλοι || Ἀστυάνακτ'·	but the others Astyanax

These are two pairings of a subject and a name. Each member of the pair contrasts with the corresponding member of the other pair;[27] the contrast is highlighted by the name being uttered after a metrical boundary. In z the boundary is the main caesura, and so verse-internal; in a', on the other hand, the boundary is the verse boundary itself. The unit, in other words, is enjambing, not because any sentence is longer than the verse, but because the rhythmical properties of verse end are exploited to highlight an antithesis: a given word receives prominence by being uttered after a metrical boundary.[28]

In other cases the prime feature of the enjambing unit is not the prominence given to a given word but the rhythmical effect of the unit as such. Surveying longer stretches of Homeric poetry, we note that the

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[25] Parry (1971: 253).

[26] This is the position I take in Bakker (1990).

[27] In other words, we have what are sometimes called two contrastive topics ('Hektor' and 'the others'), each accommodating further contrastive information ('Skamandrios' and 'Astyanax'). In stylistic terms, we might speak of 'antithesis' as a figure of speech. For an account of antithesis, chiasmus, and other figures of speech in terms of spoken language and its typical presentation strategies, see Slings (1997: 169-214).

[28] See also Edwards (1991: 42-44).

cases of what Parry called 'necessary enjambement' are quite frequent.[29] In a syntactic conception of enjambement, such cases, in presupposing a too elaborate sentential structure, are in principle troublesome for the orality hypothesis, for the reasons outlined above. On closer inspection, however, we note that these cases are no matter of sentences becoming too long or syntax becoming too complex: the enjambement is a matter of a unit straddling the verse-boundary, running from the bucolic diaeresis into the next verse. Furthermore, we observe something that is obscured by the statistics and percentage points that figure so prominently in the study of Homeric enjambement: this kind of necessary or violent enjambement tends to *occur in clusters*, creating areas of metrical turbulence at emotional high points in the narrative. An instructive example occurs shortly after Andromache's first appearance, when she begins her speech:[30]

a. || δαιμόνιε,	dearest,
b. φθίσει σε τὸ σὸν μένος,	it will destroy you your own strength,
c. | οὐδ' ἐλεαίρεις || παῖδά τε νηπίαχον	and don't you take pity on your little son,
d. καὶ ἔμ' ἄμμορον,	and on me hapless one,
e. | ἣ τάχα χήρη || σεῦ ἔσομαι·	who soon will be your widow;
f. τάχα γάρ σε κατακτανέουσιν Ἀχαιοὶ	for soon the Achaians will kill you,
g. || πάντες ἐφορμηθέντες·	all of them dashing to you,
h. ἐμοὶ δέ κε κέρδιον εἴη	and it might be better for me
i. || σεῦ ἀφαμαρτούσῃ χθόνα δύμεναι·	to lose you and die,
j. | οὐ γὰρ ἔτ' ἄλλη || ἔσται θαλπωρὴ	for there will be no other consolation,
k. ἐπεὶ ἂν σύ γε πότμον ἐπίσπῃς,	when you have followed your doom.

[29] Parry (1971: 253). Later authors on enjambement have designed different typology and terminology; see Kirk (1976: 148-50), who proposes 'violent enjambement' as the most extreme category; Higbie (1990: 29), equally proposes 'violent enjambement' (discussed 55-56).

[30] Cf. her equally moving words at *Il.* 22.451-55, with the same rhythmical characteristics, discussed in Bakker (1997a: 154-5).

l. || ἀλλ' ἄχε'·	no, but grief,
m. οὐδέ μοι ἔστι πατὴρ	and I have no father,
n. καὶ πότνια μήτηρ.	or revered mother
	(*Il.* 6.407-13)

One of the most salient features of this passage are three strong sense-breaks at the bucolic diaeresis, in units c, e, and j. The first time this happens, in c, an utterance starts that might be seen as complete in itself (οὐδ' ἐλεαίρεις); it might seem that the sequel, παῖδά τε νηπίαχον, is an adding unit in what Parry called unperiodic enjambement. Yet more is involved, for in the next line the same metrical position serves as sense break (unit e), and this time the material at the other side of the verse-boundary belongs to the same speech unit as the material before. The same thing happens somewhat later, in unit j, one of the relatively rare cases of a noun and its adjective being separated by the end of the verse. Thus a climax seems to build in this passage, a rhythmical profile that runs increasingly against the basic rhythm of the hexameter. Within the overarching metrical framework of the hexameter, a second rhythm is set up, striving temporarily against the basic rhythm yet at the same time reinforcing it. The final result is a highly effective fugal effect that regularly recurs at some of the more emotional moments of the Homeric performance.

Conclusion

We will never know how Andromache's words sounded before they were committed to writing; we do not even know *whether* they existed before writing. Nor does it matter. The effect that I have tried to capture and describe does not presuppose the written conception of language. It does, on the other hand, presuppose the oral medium. Passages such as the one just presented have to be performed in order to reach their full potential. Their sophistication and enjambement is not syntactic as a subtle or complex interaction between the sentence and the verse; it operates in an entirely different dimension. This is the dimension of rhythm as the domain in which speech can be enhanced to the point at which it becomes poetry. The rhythmical finesse that we find in Homeric poetry does not make that poetry less 'oral' in the sense that one of the tests for orality has not been passed; nor does it presuppose writing in our sense of written composition. What is important is that we

have a text whose essence lies in being performed, and which gives us ample information on its oral conception.

CHAPTER TWO

DESCRIBING AND NARRATING IN HOMER'S *ILIAD*

Elizabeth Minchin

On at least 20 occasions in the course of the *Iliad* Homer slows the flow of narrative and allows himself to dwell on an object in the possession of one of his characters: a goblet, a bowl, a robe, or a lyre. For the most part these objects are familiar, even mundane; they are the furniture of everyday living. But these items are also extraordinary, because we encounter them in the *Iliad* in a context of war and suffering and because they are all endowed with remarkable qualities that set them apart from others of their kind. This, after all, is an epic poem; these items are prized possessions. The poet tells us, for example, of Pandaros' bow (4.105-11), the robes in Priamos' storechamber (6.289-95), Meriones' helmet of boars' tusks (10.261-71), Nestor's cup (11.632-37), Andromache's headdress (22.468-72), the corselet taken from Asteropaios (23.560-62), and the mixing bowl offered as a prize for the footrace at the funeral games for Patroklos (23.740-47).

What is the poet's purpose in lingering over such items? Certainly, he uses descriptions that contain a certain amount of detail to impress on his listeners the vividness of memory: his detailed account of a prized possession becomes a guarantee of the authenticity of the tale.[1] To some extent also he is celebrating the objects in question, as items that are beautiful and therefore significant in their own right. And he uses his descriptions to reflect in turn on the heroic lifestyle: on the acquisitive nature of the hero and on the widespread use in this society of handsome gifts in the mediation of friendships and alliances. But he has another motive. This we conclude from the distribution of such passages. Almost without exception these descriptions occur in association with events that we are to see as significant in the narrative line. When, at a critical point, the poet turns his eyes from one of his characters, and his

[1] For discussion see Tannen (1989: 138-40).

or her concerns, and brings them to rest on something intimately connected with that character, he effectively prolongs the dramatic moment. This technique is familiar to us in another medium, that of film.[2] And the purpose is much the same. It is not that the poet is proclaiming the importance, or the centrality, of the object he describes; rather, he is insisting on the significance of the scene in which that object happens to play a minor role.[3] Hence the poet's focus on the boars' tusk helmet that is lent to Odysseus for the daring night-raid on the Trojan camp; on the individual items of Agamemnon's armour (corselet, sword and shield) that he takes up in preparation for his ἀριστεῖα; on Nestor's great cup, from which he will be drinking when Patroklos interrupts a quiet conversation with Machaon (the prelude to a pivotal scene in the *Iliad*); and on Andromache's headdress at the moment when she sees Hektor's body being dragged by Achilleus across the plain. These descriptive passages, therefore, are by no means digressions, in the narrow sense of the word, from the storyline; they are tied to their context, no matter how far from the present moment Homer may appear to take us.[4]

My own contribution to the study of Homer's descriptive mode begins with an analysis of the form of the small but elaborated descriptive passages that are scattered through the *Iliad*. Commentators have noted one or another feature within individual passages of formal description; but such passages have not yet been subject to the kind of scrutiny that I propose.[5] I shall demonstrate that such passages, delightful and distinctive as they are in some respects, are in others routine. After discussing the form of such passages and having suggested reasons for their homogeneity at one level, I shall consider that element through which the poet not only prolongs his description but also individualises the item in question: a brief narrative, or perhaps simply a fragment of a narrative.[6]

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2 On this point see Edwards (1987: 86).

3 See Lukács (1962: 86-89). Following Lessing (1984: ch. 16, esp. 78-84), Lukács observes that Homer does not aim to produce in words a detailed account of what he wants us to see, for this would be superfluous to the story. What is remarkable about all those objects that Homer describes in the course of the *Iliad* is that they have been caught up in human affairs at a critical moment in the narrative. This, Lukács claims, is the source of their poetic quality.

4 See Austin (1966: esp. 299-300, 303, and 307), where he observes that "[e]xpansions are not ornaments but an essential part of the drama".

5 See, for example, Kirk (1985) on the sceptre at 2.101ff., the aegis at 2.447ff., and the bow at 4.105ff, esp. 110. Andersson (1976: ch.1 at 35) almost anticipates such a study in his brief reference to what he calls 'genetic description'.

6 I shall discuss in this paper those passages of description that are prolonged by a

In the course of this discussion I shall offer some remarks on the inappropriateness of the term 'objective', which has often been used to describe Homer's narrative style. I shall propose a new analysis, and different terminology, to characterise the Homeric style and to describe the means by which Homer awakens emotional response in his audience. Finally, I shall take up Lukács' point that set-piece description, or ecphrasis, is uncharacteristic of the *Iliad*; and I shall suggest why the poet rarely undertakes that type of performance.[7] My aim throughout this paper is to increase our understanding of the descriptive mode in the *Iliad* and to observe some of the means by which an improvising oral poet works to make his story more effective.

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The narrative mode, which we identify with storytelling of all kinds, including heroic tales, is characterised by necessary interrelations of action and reaction and cause (whether reason or purpose) and effect.[8] The interconnective logic of the causal chain that underpins narrative makes it relatively easy to recall. A descriptive segment, however, is unlike narrative in that it has no such logical substructure. Indeed, in our Western *literary* tradition, the descriptive genre is relatively unconstrained: it could be characterised by its lack of guiding principles or what we might call rules. Unlike Homer's descriptions in the *Iliad*, which are on the whole dedicated to personal possessions, literary descriptions are not so confined in their subject-matter. Quite simply they record notable attributes of any item, any setting, or any place, in no prescribed order and with various degrees of elaboration. Some descriptions may be brief evocations; others may be prolonged. In terms of

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narrative element. These may be distinguished from those shorter passages that include elements of description but no narrative (for example, *Il.*11.628-29). Because the *Odyssey* is a different kind of story from the *Iliad*, and because its descriptive passages are more diverse in their focus than those of the *Iliad* (I note in the *Odyssey* only seven descriptions of objects, but seven descriptions of houses and ten of landscape), I shall consider the descriptive mode in the *Iliad* only.

[7] Lukács (1962: 87-88).

[8] The causal chain is the backbone of the narrative. For general discussion, see, for example, Beaugrande and Colby (1979: 43-66, esp. 44); Schank and Abelson (1977: ch. 2). As an example of this structural underpinning, we might consider the chain of events that leads to the quarrel between Achilleus and Agamemnon in *Iliad* 1, or the causal chain that culminates in the return of Achilleus to the battlefield.

structure or vocabulary, therefore, one literary description may have little in common with another.[9] And yet, although this generalisation may be true of descriptive discourse in our literary tradition, it does not apply to the kinds of descriptions we offer our listeners in *oral* discourse. These tend to the stereotypical. In offering a description we work within the following agenda: size/capacity/shape; material; colour; workmanship/maker; value. Those elements that the speaker deems relevant will be covered briefly, and in any order. They will be supplemented by two further contributions: often the speaker will note a remarkable feature (why would an item be worth describing otherwise?) and, finally, he or she will give some account of the item's origins, a 'history' that explains its significance in terms of human behaviour or of human relationships.[10] Indeed, it is typical in conversation, as Charlotte Linde has observed in her study of the ways in which we organise such discourse, for descriptions of objects in space to give way to the temporal sequences of narrative.[11]

Nor does this generalisation apply to Homer. Consider again the passages of description that we encounter in the *Iliad.* Homer's descriptions of objects are predictable, in two respects. Firstly, as I have noted above, the objects described, in that they belong to the heroic world, are inherently superior in respect of their material and their manufacture.[12] Secondly, the descriptions themselves, although relatively brief, are not as-

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[9] For discussion and examples from a literary perspective, see Lodge (1992: 56-60); for analysis of description in a written tradition, from a cognitive point of view, see Miller (1979: 203-9). A recent volume that offers us a rich harvest of literary description is Byatt (1991). Byatt uses the Victorian era as the setting for one of her two parallel stories and evokes Victorian literary style in generous descriptive passages. Note her descriptions of items of significance: from domestic furnishings (e.g. at 148) to pins and brooches on sale in a second-hand store (258-61). Byatt describes at 260 the jet brooch owned by her heroine, Maud: a significant object, in that it makes a link between the two stories.

[10] The item, for example, may have been purchased, or given as a gift, or found: any of these scenarios is material for a story. We may find the 'conversational' description-pattern in literary description also, notably in cases in which an author consciously strives to recreate everyday speech patterns. See, for example, Byatt (1991: 276): two speakers in conversation each describe a ring in accordance with the description-agenda outlined above: *material, workmanship, feature, history.*

[11] For examples and discussion, see Linde (1981: 104-10).

[12] Given that Homer's descriptions, like ours in conversation, are rarely of a point-for-point 'photographic' nature, we assume that he assumed that his listeners were familiar with items of this kind, although not of this remarkable quality. The exception is his description of the boars' tusk helmet of 10.261-71. His uncharacteristically careful account of the construction of this type of helmet (261-65) suggests that he may have been describing something that he felt might be unfamiliar to his listeners.

sembled at random. They are in fact constructed in accordance with a loose format that will be recognisable to us all, at least insofar as we see these descriptive passages as characteristic of epic style. Let us examine the way in which Homer assembles such passages, in order to identify this format.[13]

A description of any object from this epic world is often introduced by a phrase that announces it to be a thing of beauty, or, in the case of equipment for war, an efficient tool. So Achilleus' lyre is sweet-sounding and beautiful (9.186); his travelling box is lovely (16.222); and his shield is sturdy (18.478); Nestor's cup is very beautiful (11.632); Andromache's headdress is shining, or splendid (22.468)[14]. I shall use the term *summary description* to represent this first element. Next, the *material* (usually a metal) or the *workmanship* of the item is noted: the bolt on the door of Achilleus' hut is of pine (24.454); his lyre is finely crafted (9.187); his chest, like his lyre, is δαιδαλέης (16.222); the cup within it is τετυγμένον (16.255); Pandaros' bow is of polished horn (4.105-6); the gowns in Priamos' storechamber are of rich and varied work (παμποίκιλα ἔργα, 6.289); Asteropaios' corselet is of bronze (23.561); the krater offered by Achilleus as a prize is of silver *and* well-crafted (23.741). The foregoing qualities are often announced in a triplet of adjectives: see 9.186-87 (the lyre); 11.32-33, 12.295, 18.478-79 (three shields); 18.479-80 (a shield rim). Thirdly, the object is distinguished as being exceptional by one remarkable *feature* of its construction (again, metal is often an indicator of value): the aegis (2.448) has golden tassels; Achilleus' lyre has a bridge of silver (9.187); Nestor's cup is set with golden nails and two doves of gold rest on either side (11.633-35); Pandaros' bow has a golden string hook (4.111).[15] Or the object may be distinguished by some other indicator of exclusivity: the robe for Athene is far below all the others in the store-chest (6.295).[16] Fourthly, some reference might be made to *size*, *weight*, or *capacity*. Note such references at 2.449 (the aegis); 6.294 (the dress to be offered to Athene); 11.636-37 (Nestor's cup); 4.109 (Pandaros' bow); 23.741-42

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13 See the table on the following pages for a tabulation of Homer's descriptions of objects in the *Iliad*.

14 I read σιγαλόεις as a general term of beauty.

15 Note that at 22.470 the adjective marking value, χρυσέη, is transposed from the headdress to Aphrodite; and at 16.222 the adjective (here ἀργυρ-) is transposed from Achilleus' box to Thetis.

16 On this see Kirk (1990: *ad loc*).

TABLE 1 : AN ANALYSIS OF PASSAGES IN HOMER'S *ILIAD* IN WHICH OBJECTS ARE DESCRIBED[1]							
Location	Object	Summary Description	Material	Workmanship	Size	Feature	History
2.101-8	sceptre			101		102-8	
2.447-49	aegis	447			448-49		
4.105-11	bow		105-9	110-11	109	111	106-11
5.722-29	chariot (& wheels)	724	723-31	725	723	723, 726	
6.289-95	robe(s)	289, 294		289-90	294	294-95	290-93
7.219-23[2]	shield	(219)	220, 222-23	221	219	223	220-23
9.186-88	lyre	186-87		187		187	188
10.261-71	helmet		262-65	265		263-65	266-71
11.19-28	corselet		(16)	implied		24-28	20-23
11.29-31	sword		(16)			29-30	

[1] I have for the most part omitted those brief descriptions, such as that of Athene's gown, at 8.384-6, which do not include the elements feature and history.

[2] I thank Joe Wilson for this reference.

TABLE 1 (continued)

Location	Object	Summary Description	Material	Workmanship	Size	Feature	History
11.32-37	shield	33	(16), 33-35	32		36-37	
11.632-37	cup	632	633-35	implied	636-37	634-35	632
12.294-97	shield	294	295	295-96		296-97	295-96
16.220-25	chest	222		222		225	222-24
16.225-27	goblet			225		225-27	225-27
18.478-82	shield	478	(474-77)	478	478	479-80	369-477
22.468-72	headdress	468				470	470-72
23.560-62	corselet		561	implied		561-62	560
23.740-49	bowl		741	741	741-42	742-43	743-49
24.234-37	cup	234				235-37	234-35
24.453-56	bolt		454		454-56	454-56	

(the mixing bowl donated by Achilleus). Many descriptions are abandoned at this point, as I have noted above; but in those under discussion the poet goes further. He offers a *history* of the item, sometimes briefly, sometimes at length. This element is usually introduced by or presented in a relative clause: 4.106-8; 6.290-92; 9.188; 10.266-71; 11.20; 11.632; 16.222-24; 22.470-72; 23.560; 23.743-47.[17]

Although I have set these elements down as though they occur in a fixed order, a close study of each passage will reveal that Homer does not always follow this sequence. But despite the fact that the order of elements is not fixed, and that the poet may omit one element or another, Homer's descriptions of personal possessions touch on some or all of the following topics: *summary description*, *material*, *workmanship*, *feature*, *size*, *history*.[18] I shall refer to this cluster of elements as a description-format. I claim that this format is part of the oral poet's apparatus of memory. It is what cognitive scientists might call a knowledge structure: a format that has been learned and that can be readily accessed, like so many of the sequences he stores in active memory.[19] Given that the format that we observe in Homer appears to be a formalisation of the description-agenda that we ourselves follow in everyday conversation (and which I have outlined above), I propose that the poet may have either refined his own description-format for the purpose of epic song or learned this particular format from a master-singer. In either case the effort of memorisation would have been minimal, as this format derives from a pattern that we all appear to acquire relatively early in life.

It is important to note that a description-format does not generate particulars of description or their precise formulation. It simply offers the poet a sequence of options, each of which he may follow up or disregard, as he pleases: it generates pointers to formulae rather than the formulae themselves. By calling up the description-format whenever he wishes to linger over an item, the oral poet is able to economise on ef-

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[17] Note in this last example the absence of the relative clause.

[18] This is a refinement of Walter Arend's observation (1933: 33), where he notes the predictable nature of descriptions, which regularly include information that answers the questions *von wem*? and *wie?*

[19] We all store sequences and formats that enable us to comprehend and to communicate about the world around us: see Schank and Abelson (1977: 17-19). This work continues to be influential: see Rubin (1995: chh. 2 and 9). For a digest of Schank and Abelson's work and an outline of its application to Homer's text, see Minchin (1992: 229-41).

fort. The effort saved is quite simply the effort of deciding which aspects to describe. Nevertheless, the singing of descriptive passages still requires a degree of invention: the selection of the appropriate vocabulary of description (although, to judge from Homer's usage in the 20 passages under discussion, he draws on a limited pool of expressions of general application) and the selection, and the telling, of an appropriate *history* (which may, in fact, be prescribed by tradition). It is by this means that the poet establishes the uniqueness of the item, which has been described so far only in broad terms. This observation brings me to my next point, the role of narrative in description.

In the *Iliad* Homer does not sustain passages of pure description. His descriptions in the *Iliad* may cover only two or three lines of text; they are rarely more than seven or eight lines in length.[20] I propose two reasons for this economy: the needs of the audience and the needs of the poet. Let us begin with the audience—particularly a listening audience. Their interest in the declarative sentences of description is limited.[21] Listeners typically find narrative the more engaging medium: they are interested in the onward movement of narrative (which is presented so as to awaken curiosity, or suspense), and they are interested in character and motivation.[22] Besides, as Schank and Abelson argue, narrative is an expression of the sequential nature of all human experience; our memories may well be organised on this very principle.[23] We find it easy, therefore, to engage with and to follow narrative. Indeed, we ourselves can testify to the greater power of narrative over pure description and to

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[20] Lessing (1984: ch.16). A notable exception to the general rule, the shield of Achilleus, will be discussed below. Andersson (1976: 33), in his discussion of Homer's descriptions of setting, remarks that his "descriptive resources remain meager". For the reasons offered below I prefer the term 'economical'.

[21] A speaker must always be directly responsive to his listeners and their preferences, otherwise he risks losing his audience, and thereby losing face. Note the contrast in this respect with literary descriptions. On the dangers of set-piece description even in writing, see Lodge (1992: 60): "a succession of well-formed declarative sentences, combined with the suspension of narrative interest, will send the reader to sleep." This view was challenged by some participants at the *Epos and Logos* conference, who referred to their own favourable responses to set-piece description. But I would argue that this conference, which takes as one of its themes the composition of texts, draws together a skewed sample of the population; and that the responses of these participants are not typical of the responses of all listening or reading audiences.

[22] This is the central point of Lukács' discussion: see Lukács (1962: 87). On the pleasures of narrative, see Havelock (1986: 75-6); and for a neat summation of narrative's power of attraction, see Byatt (1986: 58), on narrative as intoxicant or tranquilliser. For comment from the field of psychology, see Brewer and Lichtenstein (1982: 473-86).

[23] Schank and Abelson (1977: 17-19, 226).

our preferences for the former.[24] After all, it is the narrative sections (most often cast as *history*) of Homer's descriptions that remain most vividly in our memories. Most of us can remember the origins of Andromache's headdress, of the gowns in Priamos' storechamber, of Agamemnon's corselet, and of Achilleus' lyre long after we have forgotten the details of their appearance.

But the reasons for Homer's preference for the narrative mode are not attributable only to the needs and preferences of his audience. As a performing poet he finds it easier to hold in memory and to sing a passage of narrative than a sustained descriptive piece (which in scope may exceed the resources of the description-format that he has learned). Narrative, as I have noted above, is easier to call to mind and to perform because of its logical chain of cause and effect.[25] The poet, therefore, only rarely undertakes set-piece description. Indeed, in most cases, he chooses narrative—a story or a story fragment—to expand or supplement description. Many descriptive passages that we have examined above illustrate this tendency: note also the *history* of the boars' tusk helmet (10.266-71); of Agamemnon's corselet (11.20-23); of the mixing bowl of silver (23.743-47); and of Priamos' cup (24.234-35). Homer's preference for narrative over description is noticeable elsewhere, too. We might observe a number of passages in the *Iliad* that he might have presented as description but that he has chosen to present almost entirely through narrative. These are not concerned with objects (the subject of this paper), but with individuals and their dress and sometimes with larger entities, such as dwellings. When Hera approaches Zeus with the intention of diverting him from the battle around Troy, we know exactly how she is dressed. But we know this not because Homer has described her appearance. Rather, he has recounted each step of her preparations for this enterprise, including all the negotiations necessary (14.159-223). In place of description we have narrative.[26] Just as when the poet sings a

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[24] I cannot claim the following as a reliable test, but I use it as anecdotal evidence to illustrate my point. I returned to Byatt (1991) in the course of writing this paper, because I had recalled that the author had used a keepsake, a jet brooch, as an element in her story (see n. 9 above); and I assumed that Byatt would have included a description. Before consulting the book this second time, I was able to recall without difficulty the history of the brooch and the part it plays in the narrative; but I did not remember any detail (beyond *material*) of its appearance. Yet the brooch is described in great detail.

[25] Havelock (1986: 76), observes: "A language of action rather than reflection appears to be a prerequisite for oral memorization."

[26] See also Homer's description through narrative of Achilleus' hut (24.448-55). On

catalogue-song, which includes fragments of stories, so it is with descriptive passages: it appears to be difficult for the poet to resist the pull of narrative.[27]

We certainly delight in the small stories that Homer offers us—as stories. But Homer has not included them in the expectation that they will please us for that reason alone. He uses the *history*-element—'the story of how this item came into the possession of X'—quite deliberately as a motif of dual reference: it refers in the first instance to the object itself, but it also takes us beyond the physical reality of the object to tell us something of its sentimental value or its broader significance.[28] Each of the items he describes is in one way or another a souvenir: whether a gift offered to cement a friendship, a keepsake that evokes joyous memories, or a trophy of war. Through the memories that it evokes it serves to tell us more about its owner, or about the situation in which he now finds himself. Let us take three examples.

Early in the epic the poet gives us an account of Agamemnon's sceptre (2.101-8). In this passage description is perfunctory (101: *workmanship*), but a narrative traces the history and the significance of the sceptre in the world of men (102-8). Furthermore, the sceptre as we now know it gives us the standard by which and against which we should measure the man who holds it, the ineffectual Agamemnon.[29] At another point in the narrative, when the embassy from the Achaians approaches Achilleus, his friends find him delighting in the sound of his lyre (9.185-89). It is a remarkable image, that of a warrior engaged in the pursuit of leisure. And it is a striking image of Achilleus, whom we remember from his previous appearance in the narrative as the combative hero, ready to stand up to his king. So the lyre suggests something about Achilleus' state of mind now that he is in self-imposed exile from the active life. He is searching for a means to fill in time. And, for all that, the lyre—paradoxically—is a reminder of that life for which he yearns. The lyre is a souvenir, as Homer tells us in his *history*-element, of Achilleus' earlier campaign, against Eëtion's stronghold; it reminds us

this point, see Lessing (1984: ch. 16).

27 On the poet's use of narrative in catalogue-singing, see Minchin (1996: 4). The long simile, which offers description through comparison, is another instance of this. The simile may begin in descriptive terms but it will slide into the narrative mode, as at 11.548-55, 558-62; 18.207-13; 24.480-83. Cf. Edwards (1987: 106).

28 For an excellent discussion, see Griffin (1980: ch. 1).

29 Griffin (1980: 9-10).

of the life he has led and the successes he has enjoyed. It is not fortuitous, therefore, that the songs he sings are κλέα ἀνδρῶν. And, to consider one last example, when Andromache sees her husband's body being dragged behind Achilleus' chariot, she collapses and tears away her headdress. It is the headdress that holds the poet's attention and that he uses (in that it represents happy memories of her marriage-day, a day that had held nothing but promise) to make real to us her grief and her sense of loss (22.468-72). We should note in this context the way in which Homer uses the *history*-element to remind us of events that 'pre-date' either the Trojan War or the quarrel in its ninth year and that have continuing significance: the lyre recalls Achilleus' destruction of Eëtion's city (cf. 6.414-28); Andromache's headdress reminds us of her marriage to Hektor (cf. 6.392-98); the robes in Priamos' storechamber remind us of Paris' abduction of Helen (cf. 3.46-51, 442-46); the cup that Priamos includes with his ransom offering to Achilleus (24.234-37) allows us to appreciate the respect in which Priamos has been held as king of Troy. To reiterate and to expand on a point I have made above, these small items are by no means opportunities for digression; rather, through Homer's descriptions (and especially through the *history* that he includes), they become instruments of cohesion.

As we have observed, the object that Homer has selected for description becomes a focus for a certain amount of evaluative information—not about the object but about the individual with whom it is associated, and the dramatic moment.[30] Rather than telling us explicitly what he wants us to think about an individual or about his present state of mind, Homer encourages us, the audience, to draw our own conclusions from information that he imparts—indirectly—through his account of speech and action. This storytelling strategy and its merits have been discussed by Tannen, who notes the greater force of so-called internal evaluation (when commentary on the narrative action is integrated into the story itself through the speech and actions of the actors) in comparison with external evaluation (when the storyteller steps outside the narrative to communicate evaluative information directly).[31] Tannen claims that in-

[30] 'Evaluation' or 'evaluative material' is a term used in studies of narrative to identify the information that is necessary to listeners if they are to understand the motivation of the actors and, ultimately, the point of the tale. On this, see Labov (1972: ch. 9, esp. 378-93).

[31] For a discussion of these contrasting modes, see Tannen (1982a: 4); Tannen (1982b: 8-9).

ternal evaluation—other things being equal—makes for more successful storytelling because it uses strategies that build on a "sense of identification, or involvement, with characters and with tellers of stories."[32] The natural consequence of internal presentation of evaluative material is that listeners are encouraged to make judgements for themselves. Of course, the evaluations that they make are guided by the storyteller. But what is important is that the listeners are not passive; they are participating in the storytelling—judging the actors, sharing their emotions, and perceiving the consequences of events in the distant past. They engage with the story because the storyteller has structured his or her telling with that end in view. The experience of listening will have been richer for them, and more satisfying, because of their active involvement.

Homer, in fact, uses both strategies described above: internal and external. Examples of internal evaluation—apart from the use he makes of the descriptions of objects and their histories, which are the subject of this paper—are his use of direct speech (especially in cases where it stands in contrast to indirect speech: contrast 11.785-89 and 783-84); his depiction of contrasts through narrative (the contrast of Hektor and Paris at 6.318-24); or in speech and narrative (the contrast of Aias the son of Oïleus and Antilochos at 23.780-92); or his biographies of dying heroes, whose death has been made pathetic through the poet's brief, even bald, account of their lives.[33] It is remarkably difficult, however, to construct a coherent tale without some form of external evaluation. In Homer evaluation in this mode is expressed largely through epithets (even the formulaic δῖος, or φαίδιμος) and adverbs, but also through such means as the poet's occasional commentary, as narrator, on the action (see, for example, his comment at 11.604).

With this discussion of internal and external evaluation we can, I believe, resolve the debate about "the often proclaimed objectivity" of Homer.[34] As Griffin observes at the close of his discussion of Homer's narrative manner, the distinction between 'subjective' and 'objective' is less clear than has been suggested.[35] I argue that to attempt to make the distinction at all is pointless in the context of oral epic; for even where

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[32] Tannen (1982b: 8).

[33] For an exhaustive presentation of these 'obituaries', see Griffin (1980: ch. 4).

[34] Griffin (1980: 139). See also Griffin's own comment (and the note thereto) on Homer's narrative manner, which he describes as "generally speaking, objective".

[35] Griffin (1980: 139).

Homer's style may give the appearance of objectivity, it rarely is objective, in the strict sense of the word. Rather, that aspect of Homer's storytelling strategy that Griffin strives to identify and describe in the poet's "pregnant utterances and scenes full of emotional weight, not explicitly spelt out but still present" is, I suggest, captured most accurately in Tannen's concept of internal evaluation.[36] It is this latter indirect (but by no means objective) strategy that underpins Homer's storytelling style in both epics, in the interests of a more successful story.

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There is in the *Iliad* a conspicuous exception to the principle that descriptions in an oral context are economical of effort: Homer's extended description of the shield crafted by Hephaistos for Achilleus (18.478-608).[37] Although the description of the surface of the shield is ambitious, note that the description of the shield itself is in accordance with the Homeric routine[38]: the shield is sturdy (478: *summary description*); it is huge (478: *size*); it is δαιδάλλων (479: *workmanship*); it has a silver strap (480: *feature*). The element *material* is subsumed in the preceding lines (474-77). The *history* of the shield has been expressed through the narrative (369-477): it has been made for Achilleus by Hephaistos at the request of Thetis. There follows, however, a remarkable account of the images worked onto the surface of the shield: the ecphrasis proper. Homer gives us no indication how the scenes of community life that he envisages are distributed across its glittering surface. Our only certainty is the Ocean-river that runs around its rim (607-8). What is significant in the context of this paper is that the format of the scenes is at times descriptive (for example, at 561-72, 590-605) but at other times—more often—it is narrative (for example, at 497-508, 509-40).[39] We see again how readily Homer reverts to narrative, as we would expect of a poet working in an oral tradition.

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36 Griffin (1980: 139).

37 For a detailed account of this passage as a description of a work of art, see Becker (1990). See also Edwards (1991: *ad loc.*), for valuable commentary on the passage.

38 The description of the shield is introduced as pseudo-narrative: ποίει, 478. Homer uses ποιέω and synonyms to introduce each new scene on the shield, as though each were just being finished by the smith-god. Thus he regulates the flow of description: see 478, 482, 483, 490, 541, 550, 561, 573, 587, 590, 607.

39 For Lessing's comments, see (1984: 95). Two other modes are represented: note

We might ask ourselves why Homer included in his song a passage of such length. I propose three functions. Certainly, the passage serves as a strategy of suspense: it delays the onward flow of narrative at a crucial moment, the moment when Achilleus is about to return to the fighting. Secondly, Homer uses armour, or garb of any kind, to shed light on the man: that is, the information he offers here has an evaluative function. Given that the smith-god himself made the armour, we are assured of the invincibility of Achilleus amongst mortals. When the hero, in his magnificent armour, returns to the field, the battle around Troy will be conducted on different terms. And there is a third point to consider, and that is that the poet has worked up such a passage as a demonstration of his diverse skills: his power of imagination, his talent for evocative description, his memory for non-narrative discourse, and his performance-style.[40] Like a list-song or a catalogue-song, a descriptive song can be a showpiece.[41] I suggest, therefore, that the poet has prepared in advance a series of scenes appropriate to the context, which he may use or not as the whim takes him and as the audience permits. Like lists and catalogues, which offer a change of pace from narrative, a sustained descriptive piece offers listeners diversion from the narrative mode; and it provides an occasion for the poet's self-promotion.

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My comments in this paper are intended as an extension of other scholars' observations on narrating and describing in Homer. Working from a cognitive point of view, I propose that Homer, when he sings in this descriptive mode, refers to a format that he has learned and stored in memory; and I note that even when Homer is ostensibly describing an item he may use narrative to supplement descriptive terms. In this respect, as in others, his strategy resembles our own in oral discourse; he comes closer than we may have thought to everyday practice. He is

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the list at 483-89; and the simile at 599-601.

40 The question arises: how might the poet have remembered such a passage? I suggest that he worked up a number of scenes, each one representing an event (with its own logical sequence of action) in communal life. The scenes themselves are so general in nature that they have probably been based on episodic scripts that the poet stored in memory. A key word, such as 'war', 'peace', or 'harvest', would have been enough to stimulate his memory for each sequence.

41 See Minchin (1996: 19-20).

ready to revert to the temporal sequences of narrative because he works more comfortably in this mode, in recognition of his own inclination and his audience's preferences, and because, in more ways than one, it makes for a livelier and more engaging performance.

Homer does not use his descriptions of cups, bowls, corselets and lyres simply to celebrate these items—as a kind of connoisseurship; and he is not proclaiming their centrality to the scenes in which they occur. He uses these descriptions in a number of ways that enrich our understanding: as I have noted above, he defines his heroes by their delight in such fine possessions; through them he draws our attention to the gift-exchange rituals that bind the heroic world; and his steady accumulation of such passages suggests to us the splendid lifestyle of heroes in epic, if not in real life. But he uses them also as part of a broader storytelling strategy: to mark and prolong the dramatic moment, to assist us in reading the action of the poem, and to keep us involved in his tale.

CHAPTER THREE

RING-COMPOSITION AND LINEARITY IN HOMER

Stephen A. Nimis

Ring-composition in Homer has been the subject of scholarly discussion for over a hundred years. The observation that Homer often repeats narrative or thematic elements in *hysteron proteron* order, producing ring-like patterns such as A-B-C-B-A, led to the idea that such patterns of repetitions were a fundamental structural device of Homeric narrative, a key to understanding his archaic mentality or to understanding his poetic intentions. Ring patterns have been explained as an aesthetic device, as a verbal analogue to geometric designs on vases, as a mnemonic device peculiar to oral poetry, and as symptomatic of the influence of writing.[1] This range of responses makes ring-composition a good context in which to evaluate some of the value judgements that are often explicitly or implicitly attached to the terms 'orality' and 'literacy'. For example, Keith Stanley, whose *The Shield of Homer* is the most sustained effort at defending, identifying and interpreting large scale ring-composition in the *Iliad*, assumes that ring patterns are deployed by Homer in order to focus attention around a central point, so that the pattern A-B-C-D-C-B-A is a structure that "isolates a central element [D] of paradigmatic significance".[2] This in turn presupposes that the structure of the ring pattern must be grasped as a spatial disposition of elements, whose impact can only be measured when that design is visualised as such. From a compositional standpoint, this implies that a text like the *Iliad* should be thought of as the unfolding of a predetermined content that existed fully formed in Homer's head before he began. In Stanley's own words, the *Iliad* is "a stable object of distanced and repeatable appraisal".[3] From

[1] For a summary and references see Stanley (1993: 307-8); Stanley himself argues that they are literate elaborations (in the *Iliad*) of an oral practice. Oralist discussion can be found in Gaisser (1969: 1-43) and Thalmann (1984) among others. For the art analogue, see Lewis (1981: 81-102), and Mackay in this volume.

[2] Stanley (1993: 12).

[3] Stanley (1993: 268).

this set of assumptions, Stanley argues that ring-composition is a literate elaboration and critique of an antecedent oral tradition.

In my own view the disposition of elements into ring-like patterns is not the result of a conscious attempt to produce meaning by the use of symmetrical designs that must be grasped spatially, but rather is the result of the activity of performance and composition itself. The focus of my discussion will not be what ring-like patterns might *mean*, but what they indicate about what the poet is *doing*. In this I shall be taking my cue from a body of work that can be loosely called 'discourse analysis', which identifies the pragmatic strategies speakers engage in as they simultaneously formulate and articulate ideas. I shall thus be imagining a much more dynamic model of Homeric composition, viewing it as a special form of *speech*, rather than as a fixed literary *text*. I shall begin by briefly summarising three accounts of ring-composition from which I shall select elements to produce a reading of Book 8 of the *Iliad* that will be in strong contrast to Stanley's own reading of that book. In doing so I want to focus on the critical assumptions about how texts are produced and understood that underlie this discussion in general.

In her article on ring patterns in Homer, Elizabeth Minchin notes that stories embedded within larger narratives generally begin with introductory material (entrance talk) followed by a proleptic summary (an abstract); and then end with a recapitulation (coda) and a return to the context from which the story arose (exit talk). The disposition of these elements, apparently universal in western narrative, forms a pair of ring-like symmetries that encircle the story proper. However, rather than a 'template' that serves an organisational function, these repetitions serve pragmatic functions that can be observed in the most ordinary kinds of discursive behaviour: principally, what discourse analysts call 'involvement', the means by which we "ensure that our story gets a hearing and that our listeners will appreciate its point."[4] Readers of Homer will immediately think of various kinds of narrative elements—similes, descriptions, speeches—that exhibit this behaviour; for in each of these cases, Homer usually marks the departure from a given context and the return to it with summary elements (e.g. "and just as . . .", "just so . . ."). Such schemas are determined by the pragmatics of effective speech, and the ring patterns that they generate do not serve to focus attention on a

[4] Minchin (1995: 26). See Bakker (1993b: 1-15) and Tannen (1989: esp. 9-35).

central element, but rather to clarify the links between successive textual units. It is not, that is, the *symmetry* that matters, but the manner in which units are integrated into the overall flow of a discourse.

Berkeley Peabody focuses on a different kind of ring pattern in his discussion of Hesiod, but like Minchin, he does not consider such patterns to be premeditated templates that serve organisational or aesthetic functions. He argues instead that ring patterns are often triggered by the poet's desire to restate or give additional emphasis to something that may have been misstated or understated, another characteristic of speech in general that has been observed by discourse analysts.[5] What looks like a ring is actually the poet backing up to some point and starting over: statement—retrogression—restatement. One of Peabody's most striking and controversial examples is his discussion of the episode of the shield of Achilleus, the episode that gives Stanley the title of his book on ring-composition.[6] Whereas Stanley sees the shield episode as an icon of Homer's transcendence of his own tradition, Peabody sees much of this episode to be characteristic of the measures that an oral poet is sometimes forced to adopt in correcting a blunder in recitation, in this case the premature statement in *Iliad* 18.114 that Achilleus will *now* return. Peabody argues that such misstatements regularly occur in orally composed discourse because of the constant interference between various levels of linguistic organisation that range from the largest plot structures to phonic plays. It is no more surprising that an oral tradition would evolve a regular means of dealing with such a situation than the fact that in ordinary conversation we often find ourselves backtracking and restating something that we are in the process of formulating. And it is precisely when we are trying to articulate something new, something complex, or something contradictory that it is likely we will more intensively use repetition and retrogression.[7]

I offer as a simple example of what appears to be a 'revision' or restatement the passage where Homer describes Aphrodite's wounding by Diomedes:

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[5] See, for example, Tannen (1993: 14-56, and esp. 41-43) on repetition and backtracking.

[6] Peabody (1975: 231-36); Stanley (1993: 9-26).

[7] Plantiga (1992). For discussion of the 'processive' character of Homeric narrative in particular, see now Bakker (1996: esp. 115-21) on ring-like patterns.

Lunging in his charge far forward the son of high-hearted Tydeus
made a thrust against the soft hand with the bronze spear,
and the spear tore the skin driven through the immortal (*ambrosiou*) robe
which the Graces themselves had woven for her carefully,
over the palm's base; and the immortal (*ambroton*) blood (*haima*) flowed
from the goddess,
ichor, that which runs in the veins of the blessed divinities;
since these eat no food, nor do they drink of the shining
wine, and therefore they are bloodless (*anaimones*) and are called immortal (*athanatoi*).[8]

This brief lesson in divine biology seems to be prompted by the poet's statement that Aphrodite started bleeding; for the phrase "immortal blood", which occurs only in this book of the *Iliad*, requires some explanation: not actually blood, but ichor, for the gods do not eat and for this reason have no blood. There can be no question in this passage of a 'ring' serving to focus attention on a central unit; rather, the oxymoron "immortal blood" prompts an explanation that ends with the statement that the gods are bloodless and immortal, restating what seems to be contradicted by this unusual situation.

Many of the examples of small-scale rings identified by Stanley and others could be examples of this simple procedure of retrogression and restatement; and in some cases such backtracking seems to be premeditated, as at the end at the end of the Catalogue of Ships when the poet reinvokes the Muse to tell him who was the best of the Achaians and who had the best horses. Homer answers the questions in reverse order, producing a ring-like pattern: Eumelos' horses are best, and Aias the best man. Then he corrects himself, again in reverse order, producing another ring: Aias was best as long as Achilleus was angry, for Achilleus was by far the best, and so were his horses (*Iliad* 2.761-70).

A1: Who was the best of men?
B1: Whose horses were best?
B2: Eumelos' horses were best
A2: Aias was the best of men . . . only while Achilleus is angry, for
A3: Achilleus was the best of men
B3: Achilleus' horses were the best

It is possible to see these six elements as comprising two interlocking ring patterns, the latter and more important one focusing our attention

[8] *Iliad* 5.335-42, tr. Lattimore, slightly altered.

on the *menis* of Achilleus; and indeed it could be argued that the self-correction of the poet is 'staged' so that he could all the more dramatically state that Achilleus was the best of the Achaians. Another possibility is to assume, like analyst commentators on this passage, that there has been a scribal error and that Τελαμώνιος Αἴας in line 768 be replaced by πόδας ὠκὺς 'Αχιλλεύς and lines 769-70 be omitted as a gloss.[9] But the received text of this passage exemplifies the 'backtracking' feature of speech that discourse analysts have found in many types of narrative. A literate poet may indeed have chosen to revise his statement about who was the best man by erasing reference to Aias and Eumelos, but this example of a ring-like pattern used as a restatement can be seen as evidence that such a procedure could be not only normal and useful, but also aesthetically satisfying. Once again the symmetry does not serve to focus attention on a central element, but is a secondary effect of the way the flow of the discourse is interrupted by the decision to restate or reemphasise something.

Mabel Lang discusses the occurrence in Herodotos of larger scale ring-like patterns by analysing his use of topic sentences or 'directional statements', that are more or less comparable to what Minchin calls an 'abstract'. Lang uses the analogy of shooting an arrow that defines a linear trajectory to some distant goal where a restatement or 'coda' will accomplish the effect of a ring-like pattern. However, on the way, many other such narrative arrows will be shot: some at closer goals, which will create interior ring-like patterns; some at even more distant goals, creating interlocking patterns of narrative. The process by which Herodotos is able in this way to gather up small and large scale digressions and fold them into a main thematic and narrative direction Lang calls 'spiralling forward'. This term acknowledges the ring-like patterns produced by abstract and coda, but also the way in which the actual articulation of the narrative is primarily a forward propulsion. The term also takes into account the associative, 'string-along style' (*lexis eiromene*) of Herodotos in which local issues of organization tend to take precedence over large-scale structures:

> [T]he way in which the narrative moves is not within a preconceived structure of logic and causality but, as Herodotos' own word 'path' sug-

[9] Kirk (1985: 241).

> gests, is very like putting one foot in front of the other toward some destination already glimpsed.[10]

Like Minchin and Peabody, Lang gives a more dynamic account of the flow of discourse, wherein a forward movement is effected in part by repetition and 'recycling' of material. That such redundancy can be observed in speech of all kinds suggests that these characteristics are part of the pragmatic functions by which authors seek to make their stories acceptable to their audiences rather than symmetries organised as a 'preconceived structure'.

Clearly, how we account for ring patterns is intimately connected with how we conceive of the poet and his relationship to his material. Stanley takes a strong stand for a poet whose use of ring-composition

> is governed by methods of organization that produce recursive structures of a complexity foreign to extemporised poetry. . . . [The use of ring patterns] in our *Iliad* to create complex effects of framing and juxtaposition indicates a concern less with preserving the inherited conventions of storytelling than with creating a stable object of distanced and repeatable appraisal, in which form itself plays an essential role in the poet's discourse.[11]

Again and again Stanley makes this claim for the poet's ability to stand apart from his creation, to grasp it whole and simultaneously, and he repeatedly posits a kind of transcendent self-consciousness to his Homer. In positing that structuring principles like ring-composition were the very means by which Homer transcended his own tradition, Stanley argues that the *Iliad* was able to have an existence apart from its performance, and that such patterns are able to be conceived from afar and as a whole instead of arising on a small scale as a result of local issues of organization and composition. What I should like to explore more deeply is the difference between viewing the *Iliad* as such a 'static object' and viewing it as a *process*. I should like to do so by recasting one of Stanley's large-scale examples of ring-composition—the whole of Book 8—as a kind of 'spiralling forward' that includes numerous retrogressions and restatements as it moves from a preliminary version of a goal to a revised version of that goal at the end. My analysis will focus on *how one thing leads to another* and what that unfolding of the discourse suggests about what Homer is *doing* in this book, and finally

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10 Lang (1984: 4).
11 Stanley (1993: 268).

how that activity resonates with the major themes of the epic. Book 8 is chosen as the example for a couple reasons: one reviewer of Stanley's book considers his analysis there to be completely convincing in contrast to others, so I believe it is a good representative example;[12] also, it is a book where mastery and order are thematised in a way that can draw clearly the contrast between Stanley's approach and my own. It is also the book in which Zeus, whose plan to honour Achilleus is at some level the plot of the poem, first articulates how he will bring that about through the complication of Patroklos' death.

Below is an abbreviated schema of Stanley's analysis of Book 8. It has the usual superficial problems of such structural analyses: namely, the question of what counts as a 'unit' cannot easily be generalised; nor is there any consistency in the scale of correspondences. Besides the fact that each of the series of main elements (A_1-E_1) ranges in size from just a few lines to more than a hundred lines, some of them are balanced in the second series (E_2-A_2) by units of vastly different scale and size: A_1 is a mere three lines, while the corresponding unit A_2 is 60 lines. Similarly, element D_1, a major portion of fighting narrative of 144 lines with numerous subunits, is paired off with a single incident of only 34 lines, the key point of the symmetry being the mention of Zeus' lightning in both parts. I do not consider these to be fatal problems for Stanley's analysis, but we can recognise at work here a desire to make things fit into a structure even if it is somewhat forced or counter-intuitive; for it is by apprehending and describing such structures that we critics can assert our own mastery over the text.

Iliad Book 8 (Stanley[13])

A_1: 1-3:	Dawn: assembly of the gods.
B_1: 4-40:	Zeus threatens gods; Athene acquiesces; Zeus' kind intentions.
C_1: 41-52:	Zeus harnesses horses and arrives on Mt. Ida.
D_1: 53-197:	Greeks eat and arm; Trojans arm; they clash for the first time.
E_1: 198-211:	Hera exhorts Poseidon to intervene, but he refuses.

[12] Schmiel (1993).
[13] Summary of the schema of Stanley (1993: 104-5).

F: 212-349: Scenes of fighting: Greeks rally, then Trojans.

E_2: 350-96: Hera exhorts Athene to help Greeks; Athene agrees.

D_2: 397-437: Zeus sends Iris to stop the goddesses, who comply.

C_2: 438-443: Zeus returns to Olympus; Poseidon unhitches horses.

B_2: 444-484: Silence of Athene and Hera; plan of Zeus; silence of Hera.

A_2: 485-565: Nightfall; Trojan assembly.

The ancient name for this book was the *kolos mache*, the curtailed battle, and Kirk notes that it is characteristic of the book as a whole that most of its initiatives and actions, divine or human, are soon abandoned or reversed.[14] The thematics of Book 8 suggest to Stanley the poet's preoccupation with the idea of delusion, represented by the inefficacy of both human and divine actions apart from the will of Zeus. The concentric structure of Book 8 serves to highlight the central scene (F) in which the 'unheroic' Teukros, bowman and bastard, evidences the degeneration of standards of behaviour:

> The inadequacy of the heroic mode—and the traditional language used to describe it—is demonstrated in D_1 (53-198a) by the human terror and confusion inspired by [Zeus'] lightning (75ff, 133ff, cf. 169ff). The futility of divine partisanship in conflict with Zeus' intentions is confirmed by the retreat of Athene and Hera from the threat of his thunderbolt in D_2 (397-437). And in the central battle scenes F (212-349), the vacuity of Agamemnon's mortal kingship is unmistakable . . .[15]

The idea that the *Iliad* contains a critique of Agamemnon's hereditary authority is a fairly common one, and Zeus' preeminence is stated and confirmed many times in the poem. Stanley goes beyond these general notions in claiming that here Homer is articulating a much more profound critique of traditional form and content. This is certainly not an impossible reading of the eighth book of the *Iliad*, but there is a curious symbiotic relationship between the notion of a poet who has mastered his own oral tradition and Stanley's own claim to have mastered the structure of the *Iliad*.

What is striking to me in the 8th book of the *Iliad* is the intense thematisation of divine activity coupled with a kind of resistance, in the psychological sense of that word, to the implementation of that divine

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[14] Kirk (1990: 293).
[15] Stanley (1993:106).

influence. That is, although the book begins with a clear 'directional arrow' aimed at Trojan victory, the actual movement towards that goal is reversed and modified so many times that we sense a reluctance on the poet's part actually to bring it about. In the following alternative schema of Book 8, I have identified some examples of such modifications by noting what might be called thresholds of decision-making. These are points in the text where something new is begun, signalled by a change in the character of the action, sometimes with a change of locale; or change in the tide of the battle, signalled by some explicit indicator of a turning point, like a *Zeitangabe* or an infusion of divine influence, or a statement "and now this would have happened, had not . . ." (καί νύ κεν . . . εἰ μή . . .). The divisions I have made often correspond roughly with Stanley's divisions, but what I have focused on are the moments where changes in direction seem to occur, irrespective of the distance between them.

Outline of *Iliad* Book 8

1: *Zeitangabe* (dawn), Divine assembly: Zeus asserts his preeminence, and forbids other gods to intervene.

66: *Zeitangabe* (noon), Zeus' lightning; Greeks retreat and then recover.

130: Reinfusion of Zeus' influence; Diomedes and Nestor retreat.

198: Hera urges Poseidon to revolt, but Poseidon refuses.

212: Zeus gives Hektor glory.

217: Hera stirs up Agamemnon to pray to Zeus for help; Zeus agrees.

335: Zeus reverses himself again and forces a Greek retreat.

350: Hera stirs up Athene to intervene for the Greeks.

397: Zeus sends Iris to scuttle this narrative development with a threat.

426: Hera retreats acquiescing to Zeus. Zeus explains the details of his plan to honour Achilleus for the first time.

484: *Zeitangabe* (nightfall) Assembly of Trojans celebrating their advantage.

The book begins with a divine assembly where the 'purpose' or 'will of Zeus' (Διὸς βουλή) to honour Achilleus is articulated clearly and where Zeus' preeminence is emphasised by threats and boasts. This 'will of

Zeus' to bring glory to the Trojans, anticipated since Book 2, but not really enacted in Books 3-7, is to be delayed no longer. He descends to earth and takes up a position to enact his purpose and ensure that no one contradicts it. This infusion of divine activity and intention can be seen in part as a more intense focus by the poet on the main plot of the poem after a series of episodes that do not really advance the cause of Achilleus. Just as the will of Zeus is thematically the 'plot' of the poem, so also, from a compositional point of view, Zeus is a figure who can be invoked by the poet at any time to reinfuse poetic order into the story. Hence, we have a strong sense that things are finally getting on track.

After the battle begins, we have another *Zeitangabe* and Zeus directly intervenes in the action with lightning and the Greeks immediately fall into a panic. This rout, however, is immediately qualified with the statement that Nestor did not run (80), and after a strange series of twists and turns, Nestor and Diomedes end up leading a successful counterattack all the way to line 130. At that point, the poet reintroduces Zeus to thunder us back on track. Not for long, however, for in line 198 Hera urges Poseidon to intervene on behalf of the Greeks, which promises to initiate yet another redirection of the story. Instead, Poseidon simply refuses Hera's request, just as Odysseus had earlier disregarded Diomedes' request for help (92), so that in each case we have a plot trajectory invoked only to be abruptly scuttled. In line 212 we return to the human plane where Zeus is once again giving glory to Hektor.

This back and forth movement between the enactment of the will of Zeus and its delay is repeated several times in this book on both the human and the divine plane. Most notable is the shift in the tide of the battle begun when Zeus unaccountably answers the prayer for help of Agamemnon (245ff). Suddenly, a new Διὸς βουλή inaugurates a rally by the Greeks, dominated by a catalogue of Teukros' kills with his bow. After nearly a hundred lines, we are abruptly told in line 335 that the Olympian switched back to the Trojan side and Hektor drove the Greeks back across the ditch. This prompts Hera for the third time to begin an intervention on behalf of the Greeks. When Zeus sends a message to Hera to desist or be punished, she immediately acquiesces, like Nestor and Diomedes earlier (139-44), acknowledging that it is Zeus who can dispose of the action as he sees fit. Back on Olympos, the themes of the initial assembly are restated: Zeus' preeminence, Hera's acquiescence, again with a number of repeated lines from the earlier scene (compare 8. 462-68 with 8.31-37). At this point Zeus outlines for the first time in the

poem the complication and resolution of the plot by the Patrokleia: how Hektor will fight successfully until Patroklos is killed, stirring up Achilleus to return. Once this has been stated, the battle is abruptly ended by nightfall, and the Trojans hold an assembly and celebrate their advantage, an advantage, however, that has been asserted rather than narrated.

The next day of battle, beginning in Book 11, again commences with direct action by Zeus, leading to the wounding of several important Greek heroes—Agamemnon, Diomedes, Odysseus—so that things seem poised for the triumphant return of Achilleus. That, of course, does not happen. Instead there is a lengthy expansion of the fighting during which Hera and Poseidon do intervene directly, Hera by turning Zeus' attention away from the action in the *Dios apate* episode (14.153-360), Poseidon by helping the Greeks wound Hektor.[16] As Zeus is 'put to sleep' by Hera, so also the narrative agenda articulated by Zeus back in Book 8 is suspended. When Zeus awakens in Book 15 to survey the situation, he abuses Hera and once again states that *he* will decide the plot of the poem, rearticulating, with significant additions, how the story will unfold: specifically he adds that he will injure his own interests by sacrificing his son Sarpedon to Patroklos.[17]

If we accept the primary will of Zeus as being to honour Achilleus, we can characterise the direction of the story in these books as an ebbing and flowing towards and away from that goal. In Book 8, the interventions of Hera all initiate reversals of the will of Zeus, irrespective of their success, as do the brief successes of Diomedes and Teukros in their respective episodes. This ebb and flow of narrative direction produces minor patterns of symmetries that often centre on or begin at what I have called thresholds of decision-making. Some of the correspondences at the beginning and end of Book 8 that contextualise the action (e.g. *Zeitangaben*, the assemblies) are what Minchin would call 'entrance and exit talk'; the parts that specify the course of the action are more like 'abstract' and 'coda'. However, it is important to note that the end of Book 8 is what Peabody and Lang would call a revised or restated version of its beginning. The poet's formulation of the plot complication

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[16] For analysis of this 'detour,' see Whitman and Scodel (1981:1-15).

[17] Note that the killing of Sarpedon in Book 16 is accompanied by the implication--not typical for the *Iliad*—that Zeus himself must submit to some all-powerful 'fate'. See Nimis (1987: 92-3).

and resolution by way of the Patrokleia is a somewhat surprising development, and the halting fashion in which Book 8 proceeds suggests that formulating this redirection caused the poet some difficulty. The symmetries in this book identified by Stanley are thus not indicative of the formal coherence of the book, but rather symptomatic of an emerging sense of narrative direction that seems to meet and overcome obstacles as it 'spirals forward' towards an end glimpsed at the beginning. The point is not that Homer began the *Iliad* without having thought of the end, but rather that the process of articulating the narrative is itself a powerful force in shaping the final outcome.

One way of thinking of this is to consider the activity of Zeus as an analogue for the activity of the poet, so that the 'will of Zeus' is synonymous with the 'plot' of the poem. That is, since Zeus is the figure who guarantees cosmic order in the represented world of the heroes, the will of Zeus in the *Iliad* can be seen as a textual function for organising the unfolding of the narrative. How we view Zeus, therefore, reflects how we view Homer. One could take the view that Zeus is the virtually omnipotent being he claims to be in several places. From this we would infer that the way things turned out in the poem was what had been planned by Zeus from the start; that is to say, he ordained the defeat of the Greeks, the refusal of the embassy by Achilleus, Achilleus' acquiescence to the request of Patroklos, and his death at the hands of Hektor. All this was the will of Zeus from the start. Alternatively, we could think of Zeus as generally in control of things, but subject to various exigencies that may occasionally require certain adjustments to his plans. This second picture would allow for the possibility that the way things turned out was not exactly what Zeus had in mind from the beginning, but rather is a version modified by various detours taken along the way.

The first of the two conceptions of the will of Zeus corresponds to Stanley's notion of Homer as a transcendent genius who is in perfect control of his material and for whom epic verse is a neutral instrument out of which he can fashion whatever he wills, and consequently that the *Iliad* was fully composed in detail in Homer's mind before he began; that is, he knew exactly where he was going with the story from the beginning. The second view of the will of Zeus would correspond to a conception of Homer involved not in representing a pre-existing content, but in constructing on the fly, so to speak, wherein the direction of the narrative at any particular place, far from being a foregone conclu-

sion, is much more tentative and open. This second view of the poet would allow for the possibility that Homer might have started out with only a general idea of where he was going, and ended up with something that took form only in the actual process of telling the story. It seems natural to us that once the poet had on some occasion arrived at this different place he would inevitably incorporate those changes in a different way the next time he told it. Homer, however, had his own methods of making his story acceptable to his audience and there is no reason to assume that such procedures ever seemed inadequate to him.

The key characteristic of Homeric poetics then would not be the formal coherence of the representation, but would rather be its processive character, its forward propulsion: that is, if we think of the labour of composition as a process of keeping the story moving forward, then obstacles encountered along the way and decisions made to circumvent them will always keep things going, but not necessarily in a way established from the beginning. Occasionally the poet will take detours or make adjustments on the fly; such adjustments may end up producing other problems requiring more adjustments, such a process potentially producing vast digressions. But the very notions of digression and detour derive from a view of narrative composition as a representation of a unified action that has some more ideal status outside the process of telling the story. The plot of the *Iliad*, however, is, like the will of Zeus, something that is under construction in the poem itself.

Earlier the vacillations of Zeus in Book 8 were characterised as a kind of resistance, in the psychological sense, to Greek defeat. I should like to end by speculating on the source of the resistance that produces in Book 8 these patterns of vacillation and false starts. To characterise it as succinctly as possible: Homer represents Zeus as aligning himself with Achilleus against Agamemnon in this particular conflict between them, despite his personal reservations (*Il.* 1.511-22). However, Zeus is traditionally the figure who provides ideological support to the hereditary authority of heroes like Agamemnon, a support that is represented in the poem many times with sceptres, genealogies, and the like. He is thus 'for' Agamemnon in general, and 'against' him in this particular instance. Like Achilleus himself, who threatens to leave, but stays; demands gifts, but refuses them when offered; declines to fight himself, but sends Patroklos instead; so also Zeus engages in contradictory behaviour that suggests he is both 'for' and 'against' Achilleus. In orchestrating the return of Achilleus by engineering the death of his best

friend, Zeus sends a 'mixed message' about the opposition between Achilleus and Agamemnon, however one chooses to interpret that opposition.[18]

Instead of asking ourselves what does this text, with its patterns and symmetries, *mean*? as though the meaning of the poem is mirrored in an immanent design that precedes and stands apart from the narrative's articulation, I would substitute the question, what is the poet *doing*? In answering this question, we can see the *Iliad* more clearly as a form of *social practice*, as an intervention in the world of ideas that seeks to address conflicts and issues that are rooted in the material conditions of Homer's times, to produce, in the words of Lévi-Strauss, an imaginary resolution to a real social contradiction. The *Iliad* does not represent social conflict from some privileged perspective outside of that conflict, but is an attempt to construct a resolution in the realm of ideology itself. There has been lengthy and inconclusive discussion about whether Homer is for or against Achilleus, whether he is conservative or progressive, whether he is a toady of the ruling class or a radical reformer. What can be said with more confidence is that the *Iliad* is a poem divided against itself. Homer, as we say, is in two minds about his hero Achilleus, a sense confirmed in Book 8 with its series of statements and revisions that finally generates with difficulty and ambiguity a plot trajectory, the 'will of Zeus', with its twisted and devious plan to give glory to Achilleus by way of the Patrokleia.

To focus on symmetries and patterns for an image of 'the meaning' of the *Iliad* is like taking the poet at his word when he claims his work is a divinely inspired *mimesis* of the truth. But Homer is neither an unconscious automaton, incapable of original thinking; nor is he a transcendent figure, capable of escaping completely the constraints of his own tradition and his own cultural context. If we assume that the *Iliad* is the work not of gods but of humans, then we can be sure it will bear the traces of their labour as symptoms of their conflicts, their doubts and their ambivalence.

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18 See P. Rose (1992: 43-91).

CHAPTER FOUR

ODYSSEUS' EVASIVENESS AND THE AUDIENCE OF THE *ODYSSEY*

Ruth Scodel

One of the most celebrated narrative problems in the *Odyssey* is Odysseus' failure to name himself for so long among the Phaiakians. His evasiveness is truly remarkable. First, in the presence of all the Phaiakian leaders, Alkinoos has suggested that the stranger may be a god in disguise (7.199-206). Such a remark invites self-identification, as Nausikaa responds to Odysseus' question about whether she is god or mortal (6.149) by providing her patronymic (6.196-97). Because the guest has not yet eaten, if Alkinoos were to ask his identity directly, he would be violating the rules of hospitality.[1] Odysseus thus has an excellent excuse not to answer, beyond stating that he is mortal, and his reply appropriately stresses the closely linked themes of hunger and mortality (7.102-221). Yet he still does not answer when Arete formally inquires who he is, after he has eaten and the other guests have left:

> τίς πόθεν εἰς ἀνδρῶν; τίς τοι τάδε εἵματ' ἔδωκεν;
> οὐ δὴ φῄς ἐπὶ πόντον ἀλώμενος ἐνθάδ' ἱκέσθαι; (7.238-9)
>
> Who are you and where are you from? Who gave you these clothes? Aren't you claiming that you reached here by wandering over the sea? [2]

Odysseus' reply discusses the clothes and his wandering, but does not say who he is or where he is from, even though he has twice asked to be conveyed to the homeland he has refused to name. This is surely peculiar. It is certainly true, as Webber argues, that Arete's question is unusual in replacing the standard second half of the question, πόθι τοι

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[1] Reece (1993: 104).

[2] The tradition shows variation between the present and the imperfect φῆς. Odysseus has not said anything about coming by sea, but the inference would be natural (especially since Arete knows the clothes were taken to the shore), and the poet sometimes extends audience knowledge to characters: see J. B. Hainsworth *ad loc.* in Heubeck (1988-92).

πόλις ἠδὲ τοκῆες; with her inquiry about the clothes.[3] Nonetheless, even though Odysseus has not been asked his identity in precisely standard form, the use of the general formula at the moment at which it is socially appropriate for a guest to identify himself surely creates an expectation that he will provide his patronymic and homeland, and probably his name. The unusual form of Arete's question mitigates the impropriety of Odysseus' failure to identify himself, but Odysseus defies the social expectations of the characters in the poem, and the narrative expectations of the external audience.[4]

Nowhere else except in the recognition with Laertes, is Odysseus' (or another character's) lying or evasiveness left unmotivated. The difficulty lies solely in this absence of motivation within the story; the poet has excellent reasons for delaying Odysseus' self-identification. B. Fenik has shown that the scene corresponds closely to a pattern of delayed naming throughout the *Odyssey*.[5] In Ithaka, clearly, the hero has practical reasons to conceal his name, and from this basis in the plot his silence about his name is thematically developed. It certainly also seems to be the case, as Fenik argues, that the theme moves out of the Ithakan sections to permeate the poem, so that even the identification of Telemachos in Sparta, for instance, takes an unusual form: when Menelaos says that all his wealth cannot make him happy because of sorrow for his friends, and particularly Odysseus, Telemachos weeps. Menelaos is still uncertain how to respond when Helen enters and identifies Telemachos (4.78-202). Odysseus puts off giving even false names. The habit of delay allows poet and audience to enjoy the favourite Odyssean device whereby a new arrival finds that those to whom he comes are very much concerned with exactly what is closest to his heart, as the Phaiakians listen to Demodokos' song about Odysseus.[6] The Odyssean narrative repeatedly develops and plays with the significance of disguise and recognition, naming and concealment.[7]

Scholars have also realised that the Phaiakian episode as a whole is influenced by the folktale type of the stranger who proves himself in

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[3] Webber (1989: 1-14).

[4] Throughout this paper, 'audience' refers to the implied audience of the *Odyssey*. The poet must have constructed this audience on the basis of his experience with real contemporary audiences.

[5] Fenik (1974).

[6] Hölscher (1939: 65-68).

[7] See Goldhill (1991: 1-36).

difficult tests and marries the princess.[8] Since this pattern is also active in the Ithakan books, and the Phaiakian episode obviously resonates with the later narrative, it is tempting to attribute as many of its peculiarities as possible simply to this thematic effect. Odysseus' silence is probably crucial to the development of this theme, since the moment Odysseus names himself, there can really be no further question of his marrying Nausikaa—his introduction to the Apologos shows how closely 'Odysseus' is linked with Ithaka (9.19-28). From the narrator's perspective, Odysseus must avoid telling his name in order to provide the opportunity for the development of the marriage-theme, the songs of Demodokos, and the other narrative pleasures of the episode, including the climactic effect of the Apologos itself.

Narratological studies have shown that Odysseus' evasive answer belongs to an exceptionally twisting narrative sequence. Both Nausikaa and Athene prepare the audience for Arete to serve an important role in accepting Odysseus as a suppliant, yet she says nothing when he supplicates her; this too is a famous narrative problem. Fenik has shown that the sequence places great emphasis on Odysseus' success in explaining the clothes: his tact in handling the sexual suspicion surrounding his meeting with Nausikaa is central to the episode. Arete questions Odysseus as she does because she recognises the clothes (7.234-35). Hölscher adds a further twist to this argument by pointing out that Arete must have recognised the clothes immediately when Odysseus arrived.[9] She has not responded, because the clothes make Odysseus' meeting with Nausikaa a delicate matter, not to be discussed in public. Odysseus' adroitness in explaining his possession of the clothes is the first test he undergoes within the folktale pattern, and although it is perhaps no life-or-death struggle, it is not unimportant. Arete's goodwill, deepened by her pleasure in his tale, provides Odysseus with extra gifts.[10] The narrator manipulates the audience: the hearer is surprised by Arete's failure to speak, until she speaks; then the adroit listener may infer why she did not speak before. Such creation of false expectations in the audience is a normal narrative technique in both *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.[11] In this instance,

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[8] Woodhouse (1930: 54-65).

[9] Hölscher (1960: 257-65).

[10] To be sure, Arete's suggestion is only effective when the males confirm it; see Doherty (1995: 77).

[11] See, for the *Iliad*, Morrison (1992); for the *Odyssey*, Olson (1995: 28-42, 140-47); see also Sternberg (1978: 56-89).

it also represents a variation in the usual action-perception-response pattern.[12] The technique does not, by itself, prove that the audience does not know what is supposed to happen, since it is possible to generate narrative suspense even when audiences know the outcome. It does prove, however, that the Homeric narrator seeks to avoid leading his audience along a predictable and familiar path.

This feature is important, because it shows that the poet can tease as well as sustain audience expectations: it extends our understanding of how a narrative based on tradition can function. That Odysseus then does not say who he is until the beginning of Book 9 could also belong to this pattern of narrative surprises and delayed motivations. Odysseus' evasiveness could work like Arete's unresponsiveness, as a tease—if the audience expects him to have a reason for it, and is suitably engaged by the minor mystery. Yet oral narratives generally privilege theme over such internal motivation. Odysseus' silence can only engage the audience if the audience expects to be able to understand why Odysseus acts as he does. The issue is thus truly interesting, because it touches on central questions for an oral poetics: to what extent does composition by theme and by analogy make ordinary motivation and verisimilitude irrelevant? Many excellent scholars would argue that oral poets and audiences do not care about them very much, and that they are not appropriate criteria for judging oral-derived narrative.[13] From this perspective, only the poet's thematic motives are important; we do not need to provide a motive for the character Odysseus. Suppose, however, we do ask about the characters as imagined, possible people within their own world: within what parameters should we work? If we are seeking to understand Homeric epic on its own terms, to what extent are we interpreting appropriately in basing our interpretations on the assumption that Homeric characters may be psychologically complex, and possess motives that the poet does not make explicit?[14] Finally, the oralist inter-

[12] de Jong (1995: 136-68).

[13] Foley (1991: 46-48).

[14] A vigorous argument for "opacity and complexity" appears in Griffin (1980: 57-67, 78-80); but Griffin seems to believe that he must reject an oralist approach in order to preserve the possibility of complexity, and thus is not very helpful theoretically. He also does not distinguish between gods and mortals as characters, while I would suggest that even the omniscient epic poet does not pretend fully to understand the plans of the gods.

preter needs to consider how far the poet relies on the prior familiarity of the audience with the story.[15]

Generally speaking, the answer to the last question, for the *Odyssey*, is clear: not very specifically. The proem's delay in naming the hero surely assumes an audience able to guess it, and so familiar with Odysseus himself. The audience seems to be expected to have a basic knowledge of the Trojan saga. The poet's failure to mention that the Kyklops has only one eye probably means that this detail could be taken for granted; the popularity of the episode in the earliest vase-paintings of epic may perhaps be extended backwards, to bolster the guess that it was already among the best-known parts of the story, even before our *Odyssey* existed.[16] Some of the mild confusions of the Kirke story could be attributed to a storyteller who knows that the audience knows. These are also the two stories to which the narrator casually alludes before actually narrating them: he says that the Kyklops ate Antiphos during his last meal (2.19-20) and that Kirke taught Odysseus a special knot (8.447-48).[17] Since these are details Odysseus' own narrative does not mention, they give the impression that these characters, at least, may already be familiar. Elsewhere, however, the poet provides adequate exposition, even for audiences quite unfamiliar with the story.

Again, usually the narrator tells the audience what the characters' motives are, or these motives can readily be inferred. By the comparative standards of oral epic, the *Odyssey* is careful and naturalistic in characterisation and motivation. Obviously, there are exceptions, some of them important, such as Penelope's decision to hold the bow-contest and Odysseus' testing of his father. I would suggest that whenever we find such difficulties in the *Odyssey*, it is not mistaken to look for a motive for the character, even when the poet's thematic needs have clearly driven the action. In considering the motives of Homeric characters, however, we should always be mindful that the competent audience's methods of constructing characters and motives are not likely to be identical to those of the readers of modern novels, but to be based on the procedures of traditional referentiality.

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[15] There is strong polemic on this point in Mattes (1958: 123-30).

[16] On early illustrations of the scene, see Touchefeu-Meynier (1968: 10-21); Fittschen (1969: 193).

[17] Richardson (1990: 100). Cf. Garvie (1994: 325-26 [on 8.447-48]).

For example, because Odysseus is a consistently manipulative character in a wide variety of stories, we can safely assume that the audience is always prepared for him to lie or to avoid telling truths that would be unhelpful to him. Odysseus notoriously omits Agamemnon's claim to be 'more kingly' than Achilleus (*Il.* 9.160-61) when he conveys Agamemnon's offer of recompense to Achilleus; he is a tactful man. In his self-introduction at the beginning of the Apologos, he claims to be famed precisely for his *doloi* (*Od.* 9.19-20). That does not mean that the audience would not ask why he lies on any occasion; on the contrary, since he generally pursues some practical, usually obvious goal, his traditional character allows the audience immediately to ask what his goal might be in a particular situation. If he did not have this well-established character, the audience might have to consider the possibilities that he is not lying but mistaken, or that the poet is confused. At *Od.* 6.66-67, in contrast, the narrator explains Nausikaa's mild lie about her motives—the audience does not have the preparation to understand it without help, and perplexing the audience with an unmotivated and unexplained action would have no narrative advantages. With Odysseus, the first question, when he lies or evades, is the practical goal he seeks.

Scholars have offered various explanations for why the character Odysseus avoids identifying himself. None is quite satisfactory. The simplest explanation that has so far been offered is that Odysseus fears being disbelieved. As a shipwrecked beggar he can hardly announce himself as the famous hero.[18] Yet even as a shipwrecked beggar, he has made his hosts wonder whether he might not be a god (7.199-206); why then should he hesitate to identify himself as a great hero? Without a name, he is almost immediately accepted as a potential son-in-law by Alkinoos (7.312-315). Critics, from Aristarchos onward, have found Alkinoos' behaviour difficult to accept.[19] Yet not only is the marriage theme central to this entire segment of the poem; Alkinoos' offer marks Odysseus' astonishing charisma.

Mattes has argued, and convinced many readers, that Odysseus does not feel himself to be the famous hero, that he is psychologically incapable of presenting himself as Odysseus until his experiences among the

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[18] Besslich (1966: 61-66): "The spontaneous reaction of the hearer would be: anybody can say that."

[19] Kilb (1973: 61-74), rightly emphasises the Phaiakians' astonishment at Odysseus' sudden appearance, which leads to the speculation that he might be a god.

Phaiakians gradually restore his sense of self.[20] This argument, obviously, relies on the assumption that Homeric heroes have sensibilities of this kind; it is psychologising. Yet there are objections to it that do not depend on the interpreter's opinion of what psychology is possible in Homer. Odysseus does not appear to be less than fully himself anywhere in the Phaiakian episodes; his only weakness, physical or psychological, is his doubt whether he can run faster than any Phaiakian (8.230-33). Odysseus answers the parts of Arete's question he does answer with considerable cunning, telling the story of how he was saved by Kalypso and then held against his will as a parallel to his experience with Nausikaa, of which Arete is suspicious.[21] Besslich has shown especially that Odysseus' partial answer disguises itself as a full one. Yet the more adroit Odysseus seems to be, the less likely it is that he is suffering from any inner loss of self, for this adroitness is precisely the most characteristically Odyssean quality of Odysseus. When the naked Odysseus meets Nausikaa on the beach, he manages not only to flatter her adroitly, but to make it clear that he is a person of high social status, who previously had many followers (6.164-65). He is at his most careful throughout the episode. He lies fluently to Alkinoos and Arete, telling them that Nausikaa urged him to accompany her to the city, and that he had refused (here, again, the audience must infer his motives).

If we consider the story as a whole, Odysseus has reason to be cautious about his name.[22] It is not just that caution in identifying himself may generally be wise; there are prophecies about him. Twice already he has encountered characters who have heard about him before, Polyphemos and Kirke. Both had prophecies specifically of Odysseus' name, and both prophecies are reported to Odysseus and to the audience only after their fulfilment. After Odysseus (foolishly) identifies himself to the Kyklops, Polyphemos delivers a full recognition speech:

> ὢ πόποι, ἦ μάλα δή με παλαίφατα θέσφαθ᾽ ἱκάνει.
> ἔσκε τις ἐνθάδε μάντις ἀνὴρ ἠΰς τε μέγας τε,
> Τήλεμος Εὐρυμίδης, ὃς μαντοσύνῃ ἐκέκαστο
> καὶ μαντευόμενος κατεγήρα Κυκλώπεσσιν·
> ὅς μοι ἔφη τάδε πάντα τελευτήσεσθαι ὀπίσσω,
> χειρῶν ἐξ Ὀδυσῆος ἁμαρτήσεσθαι ὀπωπῆς.

20 Mattes (1958: 123-42).
21 Besslich (1966: 65-66).
22 Brown (1966: 200) comments "His excessive caution here seems to be a reaction against his earlier foolhardiness in giving his name to the Cyclops."

ἀλλ' αἰεί τινα φῶτα μέγαν καὶ καλὸν ἐδέγμην
ἐνθάδ' ἐλεύσεσθαι, μεγάλην ἐπιειμένον ἀλκήν·
νῦν δέ μ' ἐὼν ὀλίγος τε καὶ οὐτιδανὸς καὶ ἄκικυς
ὀφθαλμοῦ ἀλάωσεν, ἐπεί μ' ἐδαμάσσατο οἴνῳ. (9.507-16)

Alas, truly the ancient oracles come upon me. There was a prophet here, noble and big, Telemos son of Eurymos, who was exceptional in prophecy, and practising as a prophet grew old among the Kyklopes. He told me that all these things would happen in the future—that I would lose my sight at the hand of Odysseus. But I always expected that a big, fine man would come here, clothed in great valour. As it is, a little worthless wimp blinded me of my eyes, when he had overcome me with wine.

The entire episode becomes an object-lesson in the value of concealing identity. Odysseus replies truthfully and appropriately when Polyphemos asks who he and his men are; they are, he replies, Achaians returning from Troy, followers of Agamemnon (9.259-271). [23] Later, after sampling the wine, Polyphemos asks Odysseus' own name, at 355-56, with the promise of a guest-gift. Odysseus, however, first brings him more wine three times, and waits until he is drunk, before he answers with his false name. Otherwise, presumably, even a stupid giant might consider 'Nobody' a peculiar name. Odysseus does not say at this point why he avoided giving his name, or thought it prudent to call himself 'Nobody.' The trick turns out to be useful only because the other Kyklopes phrase their question to the afflicted Polyphemos in just the right way. Probably the usual auditor of the story would not notice that Odysseus' trick is more lucky than clever, because even a hearer who has never heard this particular story has heard stories of this kind, and can guess approximately how events will turn out. If Odysseus lies here without good reason, however, the good sense of the lie is abundantly vindicated. When he reveals his identity, not only does he make it possible for Polyphemos to curse him by foolishly revealing his name, but he learns that he would have died, had he revealed his name sooner. As Carolyn Higbie has pointed out, the Phaiakian episode and the Polyphemos episode echo each other, for the Phaiakians ask Odysseus' identity three times, as Odysseus tells his to the Kyklops thrice.[24]

And that lesson is repeated again less emphatically later. After Kirke has seen her magic fail with Odysseus, she first asks his name: τίς

[23] His original answer to Polyphemos was not evasive, since the personal name is not essential in this situation; cf. Webber (1989: 8).

[24] Higbie (1995: 164-65).

πόθεν εἰς ἀνδρῶν; πόθι τοι πόλις ἠδὲ τοκῆες; (10.325). But then she answers her own question:

> ἦ σύ γ' Ὀδυσσεύς ἐσσι πολύτροπος, ὅν τέ μοι αἰεὶ
> φάσκεν ἐλεύσεσθαι χρυσόρραπις Ἀργεϊφόντης,
> ἐκ Τροίης ἀνιόντα θοῇ σὺν νηῒ μελαίνῃ. (10.330-2)
>
> You are surely many-turning Odysseus, whom Hermes, he of the golden wand, always told me would come, as he sailed away from Troy with his swift black ship.

Her prophecy, like Polyphemos', refers to Odysseus only by his name, and Kirke can guess at Odysseus' name only because he has already fulfilled the prophecy. She would, presumably, have been a more formidable opponent for Odysseus had the prophecy warned her more effectively.

So Odysseus could have a legitimate concern that his hosts may have a negative prophecy about him. Both prophecies have mentioned him by name, and it is only his name that Odysseus so vigorously conceals. When he boasts of his athletic skills, he reveals that he was the second-best archer in the Achaian army—a detail that might identify him, if Demodokos' songs happened to mention it.[25] The loss of control in anger is also characteristic of Odysseus, as Demodokos' first song, about a quarrel with Achilleus, and the end of the Kyklops episode show (the narrator also exploits this feature of his character in the recognition with Penelope). Yet even in his anger he avoids the critical details of patronymic, homeland, and name (8.202-233)—details he foolishly revealed when boasting to Polyphemos.

Of course, the Phaiakians do have a prophecy. However, it is distinctly different from the other two. First, it does not name Odysseus:

> ἀλλὰ τόδ' ὥς ποτε πατρὸς ἐγὼν εἰπόντος ἄκουσα
> Ναυσιθόου, ὃς ἔφασκε Ποσειδάων' ἀγάσασθαι
> ἡμῖν, οὕνεκα πομποὶ ἀπήμονές εἰμεν ἁπάντων·
> φῆ ποτε Φαιήκων ἀνδρῶν περικαλλέα νῆα
> ἐκ πομπῆς ἀνιοῦσαν ἐν ἠεροειδέϊ πόντῳ
> ῥαισέμεναι, μέγα δ' ἧμιν ὄρος πόλει ἀμφικαλύψειν.

[25] Kirk (1962: 290) argues that Odysseus-the-archer of the *Odyssey* belongs to a different strand of tradition from the spearman of the *Iliad*. The narrator here is perhaps mindful that none of Odysseus' memorable deeds at Troy relies on the bow; hence the boast does not announce his identity—indeed, perhaps the Phaiakians are temporarily deceived into thinking their guest is Teukros or Meriones!

ὣς ἀγόρευ' ὁ γέρων· τὰ δέ κεν θεὸς ἢ τελέσειεν,
ἤ κ' ἀτέλεστ' εἴη, ὥς οἱ φίλον ἔπλετο θυμῷ. (8.564-71)

But this is how I once heard my father Nausithoos talking, who said that Poseidon would be angry with us, because we provide painless conveyance to all. He said that someday Poseidon would smash a well-made ship of the Phaiakians on the misty sea, as it was returning from conveying someone, and throw a great mountain around our city. So the old man spoke. But the god might accomplish these things, or they may be unfulfilled, as his heart wishes.

Second, of course, it is unlike the others because it is narrated before being fulfilled. These two differences obviously go together in the narrative economy: such a prophecy could not appear before Odysseus' return if his name appeared in it. Significantly, this prophecy is told in the speech in which Alkinoos finally asks Odysseus his identity in a way that cannot be evaded; learning the relevant prophecy and being forced to speak go together. Odysseus thus has double reassurance before he speaks. On the one hand, they are familiar with his name from Demodokos' performance, and on the other, it has no bad associations. The Phaiakians apparently do not recognise any specific connection linking their long-established practice of providing safe homecoming for strangers, Poseidon's possible anger, and this particular stranger.

Obviously, we cannot be certain that Odysseus is evasive because he is anxious about possible prophecies. The motive is a plausible one, however. In order to imagine that Odysseus is evasive for this reason, we do not need to posit any particular psychological complexity: the motive is a practical one, typical of Odysseus. The poet's language would have presented no difficulty in expressing it; there is nothing unhomeric about the reasoning. In assuming that Odysseus is evasive for this reason, the interpreter in no way diminishes the thematic significance of naming. Indeed, this assumption supports the thematic development, as more psychological interpretations of Odysseus' behaviour do not, since the prophecies develop a significant aspect of the naming theme: crafty Odysseus is dangerous to those who do not recognise him. Nor, as the earlier examples have shown, is it unhomeric that the poet does not explain Odysseus' reasoning; the narrator sometimes leaves some motives to be inferred by the audience. It is, however, difficult for the audience to infer this particular motive, because the prophecies, though they are in the past of the story, are still ahead in the narrative.

Odysseus has experienced them, but the audience has not heard about them yet.

Hence, probably because there is no clear and simple way for the narrator to indicate it, the connection between Odysseus' evasiveness and the prophecies is never indicated explicitly. Arete's reason for not responding to Odysseus' initial plea is likewise implicit, but at the moment she finally speaks, the narrator does have a convenient moment to explain that she recognises the clothes. The narrator is thereby able to invite the audience, however briefly, to consider her motives, both for not speaking before, and for speaking as she does when she questions Odysseus. By the time Odysseus mentions the prophecies, however, his silence among the Phaiakians is no longer important in the narrative.

An Analyst would assume that a *Bearbeiter* has clumsily rearranged material from an earlier version that followed chronological order. It is, of course, possible that the narrator has slipped, forgetting that the audience does not know everything he knows. On the other hand, if we could assume that the poet expects the audience already to know about the prophecies from other performances (whether of an alternative *Odyssey* or of single episodes) Odysseus' evasiveness, though not explained, would not really be opaque: the audience could supply his motive. But can we make such an assumption? If any of these prophecies were essential to the plot of its episode, the case for prior knowledge by the audience would be much stronger, since Polyphemos and Kirke seem very likely to be old stories. All these prophecies, though, are inorganic—the stories would work perfectly well without them. So it is worth stopping to ask what function they serve.

The prophecy to Polyphemos is weakly connected to the rest of its episode. If the Kyklopes do not care about Zeus or the gods, as Polyphemos elsewhere claims (9.275-76), it is hard to imagine the context for prophetic activity; if they enjoy the Golden-Age conditions implied by the ethnographic introduction for the episode (9.107-11), a working prophet would hardly seem necessary. Prophecy is, in Greek thinking, an advanced skill, an odd one to find among the primitives. The prophecy, then, seems to be added to a story that is complete without it. It provides an epic colouring in the folkloric story, and serves to confirm Odysseus' wisdom in concealing his name.[26]

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[26] Cf. Heubeck on 10.330 in Heubeck (1988-92: Vol II, 62): "Such references to oracles (familiar enough in the world of men but not found in the traditional folk-tale) bring

Kirke's prediction is more complex, although again her prior knowledge of Odysseus' coming is not very important to the tale. It confirms Odysseus' victory over her, but the victory is independent of it. Her prophecy comes from Hermes, and this connection invites attention to the role of Hermes in warning Odysseus against her earlier and in providing him with *moly*. In this story, Hermes appears on both sides: he warns Kirke that Odysseus will be invulnerable to her magic, and himself guarantees that invulnerability. Hermes' help to Odysseus is a problem, since elsewhere in the Adventures the gods do not openly intervene to help him, and since Hermes does not act as Odysseus' patron elsewhere in the *Odyssey*, or provide any explanation for his intervention; nor is Hermes' prominence determined by any importance he has in the *Odyssey* as a whole. Odysseus notoriously does not explain how he recognises Hermes, probably because the poet briefly lost control of the difficult management of first-person narration.[27] Whatever its cause, the naming of Hermes, in a narrative that generally avoids naming gods, implies that the identity of the god is important, and perhaps that his role as a helper in this story or related stories was familiar enough that the poet took it for granted.

Hermes' intervention marks a profound shift in the nature of Odysseus' adventures, since from this point on he is consistently provided with prior information about the dangers he will encounter. Not only does Hermes tell him how to escape Kirke's enchantment; he also knows in advance what to do in the Underworld, how to save his ship from the Sirens, what will happen when he goes past Skylla's cave, and what danger awaits on Thrinakia. He also knows about the danger posed at home, by the suitors. Odysseus has no prior information about any of his earlier adventures. The double intervention of Hermes in this episode thus marks a pivot in the narrative, from adventures in which Odysseus knows nothing of what is before him, through an adventure in which both actors have information from Hermes, through those for which he shares the knowledge others have. He recognises the Sirens, even as they recognise him. Both halves of the Adventures are fated, but Odysseus shares in prophetic knowledge only in the final group.

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the story closer to the heroic world."

[27] This does not mean, as analyst or neoanalyst critics believe, that "this episode has been carelessly transferred from a third-person narrative to a first-person narrative" (Page [1973: 56]), only that the poet has less experience generally with first-person than with omniscient third-person narrative. Cf. Jörgenson (1904: 372-74).

Kirke provides much of this information herself, and tells Odysseus how to obtain the rest, from Teiresias. The transformation of Kirke from threat to helper (though a not entirely unambiguous one, since the stay with her delays Odysseus' return) is critical to the narrative. One function of the prophecy is perhaps to help motivate this change by suggesting that it was fated. Even if Kirke had clear motives, Odysseus, as a mortal, would not be in a good position to inform his audience about them. The prophecy also emphasises the role of Hermes in this adventure. Since the adventure with Kirke serves as a prelude to the Nekyia, he presumably helps Odysseus in his role as Psychopomp, as he helps Priamos reach Achilleus' hut in *Iliad* 24, in another quasi-Nekyia.[28] Yet the prophecy apparently uses the epithet πολύτροπος of Odysseus (10.330-32)—at any rate, Kirke uses it in referring to the prophecy—which otherwise is used three times only in extant archaic poetry, once of Odysseus in the first line of the *Odyssey*, twice of Hermes (*H. Hermes* 13.439). This link, as well as the association between Hermes and Odysseus' name-bestowing grandfather, Autolykos (*Od.* 19.394-412), suggests a rich traditional association between Odysseus and Hermes, an association the *Odyssey* does not elsewhere exploit.[29] Hermes also serves as the messenger who delivers Odysseus from Kirke's doublet Kalypso, and Odysseus claims that Hermes told Kalypso about Helios' complaint to Zeus after the Companions killed Helios' cattle (12.289-90). If Hermes is important for the meeting of Kirke and Odysseus, a prediction is a simple, local way of manifesting that link, since Hermes elsewhere serves as intermediary between the Olympian gods and lesser powers. That is, Kirke's foreknowledge of Odysseus' coming may evoke traditional associations, but need not itself be 'traditional', already an expected part of the story.

The Phaiakians' prophecy is strangest. Ordinarily, characters in Greek narratives do not regard prophecies and omens casually. They may seek to avoid fulfilling them, like Oidipous; they may try to avert negative signs by prayer or sacrifice (as Klytemnestra does in *Libation Bearers*); they may try to force the gods to modify what they have said, like Herodotos' Themistokles; they may misunderstand them, like Herodotos' Kroisos; or they may deny their validity, as Hektor does to Poulydamas (*Iliad* 12.234-40). Alkinoos, though, speaks fatalistically.

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28 See Crane (1988: 31-40).
29 Cf. Pucci (1987: 23-25).

Either the event will happen, or it will not, but he does not consider changing his people's custom of providing secure returns to strangers. Even odder, of course, is the fulfilment of the prophecy. Poseidon does not, as predicted, smash the Phaiakian ship, but instead, on Zeus' advice, turns it to stone (13.156-57, 163-64); the poet shows the Phaiakians trying to propitiate Poseidon so that he does not cover their city with a mountain, but does not inform the audience whether they succeed (13.184-87), though certainly there are no Phaiakians in the poet's own world.

It is not unusual for authoritative predictions to be slightly imprecise, even as they are always substantially true.[30] Such imprecise predictions keep the audience prepared for what is to come, without removing all suspense; and since the characters do not modify their actions in response to imprecise predictions, minor inconsistencies do not matter. For the poet to include such predictions in the narrative must be a traditional practice, but it is surely very unlikely that the tradition would maintain an inconcinnity between prediction and outcome through repeated performances. In this instance, exceptionally, the poet motivates Poseidon's slight change of plan, and so makes the audience notice that the fulfilment does not exactly correspond to the prediction. The connection of the Phaiakian ship to an actual rock is a surprise that the poet does not want to pass unmarked.

The three prophecies obviously belong together: they bind the Adventures to the Phaiakis, giving an Odysseus who is fated to cause trouble to those he meets.[31] They seem, therefore, firmly placed in *this* particular *Odyssey*, where they mean far more than they would in performances of individual episodes. Whether or not they are 'traditional' in the sense that the poet heard them from another performer before including them in his own performer, they do not appear to be 'traditional' in the strongest sense, that the poet expects his audience to be familiar with them already. If, however, the audience does not know that Odysseus needs to be worried about prophecies when Odysseus evades Arete's question, his behaviour is genuinely opaque, and evidently has remained so. The narrator may well have in mind a perfectly satisfactory reason for Odysseus to behave as he does, but the audience cannot guess that

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30 The 'insufficiency principle' of Schadewaldt (1966: 110, 140).

31 So Eisenberg (1973: 155-56).

reason until a point in the narrative when it is no longer interested in the question.

If the audience does not know Odysseus' specific motives, its members must be expected to tolerate narrative that is not immediately transparent. In the Ithakan books, the narrator is extremely cagey, not revealing much of Odysseus' exact plans even while regularly reporting his thoughts, as though the manipulativeness of the character extends to the author.[32] In the case of Odysseus, we may guess that the audience will take a motive for evasive behaviour on faith for a long time, because everyone knows that Odysseus usually has a reason for his actions, and that it may not be an obvious one. Traditional referentiality is at work, then, but the reference is not to specific details that would explain the narrative at hand, but to the essential features of a traditional character.

Sometimes we assume too easily that traditional narrative must be fully transparent to all members of the audience, all the time.[33] It may in fact be an important traditional technique for narrators to engage in small-scale mystifications. In performances of the kind represented within the epic, narrators could often create interest by failing to explain particular elements immediately, but the tension thus created would be resolved quickly. In the *Odyssey*, the enlargement of scale requires far more tolerance from the audience, which needs skill in receiving narrative more than precise knowledge of individual stories.

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32 See Olson (1995: 140–47).

33 Not atypical is Wyatt (1965), especially n. 10: "Had there been any lack of comprehension among his hearers, Homer would have known of it and would either have changed the phrasing of his remarks, or provided more introduction to them, or have later offered an explanation of the confusion. He simply was not in a position to allow perplexity in an audience which would have denied him payment if themselves denied of comprehension and thus satisfaction."

CHAPTER FIVE

HOMER AND HISTORICAL MEMORY

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Some Theoretical Considerations

I should like to deal with the historical memories that can be found in the *Iliad* and with the relationship between fiction and reality in this epic. The question is of immediate interest as, subsequent to the new excavations at Troy under the direction of Manfred Korfmann,[1] many hypotheses have been proposed that claim a far-reaching historicity for the events told in the *Iliad.* A new scholarly journal, *Studia Troica*, is continuously publishing contributions on this subject.

The problem of historical memory in the *Iliad* is related to the origin of the epic. The *Iliad* was recorded about five hundred years after the presumed fall of Troy in about 1200 BC. It may have been composed with the aid of writing (that is, it may have been dictated in the second half of the seventh century), but certainly there was a long oral tradition behind it. If the Phoenician alphabet was taken over by the Greeks in the first half of the eighth century, then a completely illiterate period of at least 400 years lies between the alleged fall of Troy and the first use of writing. If we wish to know whether a tradition of historical facts was possible under these circumstances, we have first to define the rules to which purely oral traditions are subject.

During the course of Homeric studies, there have been several attempts to explain the origin of the Homeric epics by comparison with the oral poetry of other cultures. Since the end of the 19th century scholars have tried to compare Homer with the Serbo-Croatian oral heroic poetry extant in Bosnia. On behalf of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna, Professor Murko visited Bosnia in 1913 and subsequently

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[1] Cf. now Korfmann (1995).

published his findings in a number of articles.[2] Later, Milman Parry, having completed his doctoral thesis in Paris in 1928 on formulaic language in Homer,[3] undertook his seminal field research in 1933-1935. Despite the extraordinary success of his work and method, the comparison between Homer and the Serbo-Croatian epics is only partly helpful. While it is true that the Serbo-Croatian heroic songs developed in very remote areas, they were nevertheless influenced by literate culture in various ways. The comparison is extremely useful in respect of the technique of oral poetry ("composition by formula and theme"), providing deep insights into the motifs of heroic poetry, but it does not help us to understand the historical dimension of epic poetry. There can be no doubt that the main topic of the Serbo-Croatian songs—the battles in the Kosovo *polje* and especially the defeat of the Christian Serbians in 1389—could easily have survived in the memory of the people owing to national propaganda within their literate culture. We cannot, however, test whether this would have been possible in a purely non-literate society. This also holds true of the mediaeval epic in the West. Certainly, the *Nibelungenlied* and the *Chanson de Roland* both contain some genuine historical fragments of a different kind. The *Nibelungenlied* refers to events that took place 700 years before its time (e.g. to the Burgundians at Worms, to Attila and to Theoderic). In the case of the *Chanson de Roland*, reference is made to the rearguard action of Charlemagne's army at Roncevaux in 778, though in reality it was directed not against the Saracens as in the epic, but against Basques in the Pyrenean mountains. These two legends developed in literate cultures that contained elements of a historical consciousness and a written tradition, both of which time and again may have influenced the singers.

A valuable approach to the problem of the oral transmission of historical facts has been made by sociological and anthropological research, especially through observation of our own cultural environment and through collection of ethnological parallels. For systematic reasons I begin with *La mémoire collective*,[4] the book by the French scholar Maurice Halbwachs whose research was influenced by a background of general sociological studies. He was the first to introduce the concept of a collective memory, unfortunately without defining it precisely. At any

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[2] Cf. Murko (1913); Murko (1915a); Murko (1915b); Murko (1919).
[3] Parry (1928a)
[4] Halbwachs (1950).

rate his concept points to the basic fact that the oral memory of man does not go back further than about 80 years; it results from his own experiences and his social communication, and has as its last component information handed down by grandparents. The Dutch scholar Jan had the same phenomenon in mind when he spoke of 'recent past' or 'oral history'.[5] Recently, the German Egyptologist Jan Assmann has dealt with this problem.[6] Referring to Halbwachs' concept of collective memory he coined the term 'communicative memory' and contrasted it with 'cultural memory'. To this 'cultural memory' he attributed those elements of the past that were preserved in rites, festivals and myths, and lastly in a written tradition. However, this concept is not so clear-cut as the concept of 'communicative memory'. It is difficult to conceive as 'memory' that which we are able to understand as a past event only after rational analysis. People who celebrate rites and festivals do not always conceive of their activities as something remembered. On the other hand it seems a very forced mode of expression to regard as 'memory' the contents of books that were not read for centuries or at least not understood, such as certain books of antiquity that only later on developed a strong effect on readers. It is clear that a very limited range of cultural conditions needs to be fulfilled in order to preserve written texts over long periods of time. It seems wiser to set 'historical consciousness' against communicative memory. In this context 'historical consciousness' should be defined as the sum of those ideas of a group about the past that exceed the contents of the communicative memory, that is, the normal oral memory. These ideas can be transmitted by books in the course of education or can be suggested by the remains of past times such as ruins of castles, which by their fragmentary nature convey a historical perspective. Therefore I should like to distinguish between communicative memory, which is most conspicuously supplied by family traditions, and historical consciousness, which is dependent on the existence of certain cultural preconditions such as written traditions or relics like buildings and artefacts.

In the case of Homer, all confidence in the idea that historical traditions could be transmitted orally from Mycenaean times has been destroyed by anthropological research. As early as 1968 Jack Goody and Ian Watt drew attention to the interplay of remembering and forgetting

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5 Vansina (1985: 25 and *passim*).

6 Assmann (1992).

in oral cultures and spoke of "the homeostatic organisation of the cultural tradition in non-literate society."[7] They claimed that in an oral society the tradition is always adjusted and assimilated to the conditions of the present by eliminating everything that is no longer relevant. As time passes, the 80 years of immediate memory are constantly advancing in relation to the present, and in each successive generation the memory of the erstwhile oldest generation is lost. In other words, people remember only their own grandparents or great-grandparents. The concept of homeostasis is difficult to understand. Goody and Watt refer to the biological use of homeostasis in reference to the maintaining of equilibrium in the human body;[8] however, the application of this concept to a cultural tradition is not entirely convincing, for in what does the equilibrium consist when the facts that are told are always changing? Whatever the concept may imply, it is an important observation that on the whole, the only facts to be told and transmitted are those that are part of the communicative memory. The main point of this theory is the claim that in non-literate societies historical traditions do not exist. Older traditions are displaced when they are no longer relevant to present life.

A new approach based on extensive African material has been offered by the Dutch anthropologist Jan Vansina.[9] He suggests that in tales of the past, there is always a distinction between the immediate past, which is narrated by the storytellers and poets, and the time of origin. The recent past is continually shifting. Vansina refers to the period between the recent past and the time of origin as the 'floating gap', because the forgotten interval between the two continually increases.[10] I shall return to this point. Because Vansina's dates are imprecise it is useful to examine South African Zulu praise poetry with the intention of testing the duration of oral memory with more accuracy.[11] Between 1888 and 1912 in South Africa James Stuart collected 360 praise poems of which Trevor Cope recently published a selection of 26 with a commentary.[12] In Cope's collection the oldest praise poem refers to Ndama,

7 Goody and Watt (1968: 30).

8 Goody and Watt (1968: 31). Cf. in respect of this concept Ong (1982: 46).

9 Vansina (1985).

10 Vansina (1985: 23f).

11 Cf. the survey given by Lombard (1993: 87ff).

12 Cope (1968). D. Rycroft and A.B. Ngcobo supplemented this edition by an edition (which is based on the Stuart collection as well) of praise poems on Dingana, Zulu-king and successor of Shaka: Rycroft and Ngobo (1988).

a Zulu chief of the mid 18th century; he was the great-grandfather of Shaka who is famous as the founder of the Zulu kingdom and who reigned from 1816-1828. The praise poem is not very specific. Ndama is praised because he was a good hunter, and he is called "precious little amulette of our people" . . . "that continually lives in a towering rage, with his shields on his knees" (the last two formulas were later transferred to Shaka). In addition there occur names of certain ancestors.[13] Elsewhere, in other poems, there are also references to one Zulu, the founder of the clan that was the core of the tribe. Characteristically, the exact relationship of Zulu to his successors seems to be hard to define.[14] At any rate, the Ndama praise poem recorded by Stuart, which goes back about 150 years, does not preserve historical facts. It is only 70-80 years before Stuart, with the praise poems for Shaka, that historical events begin to be mentioned. With some reservations, we can learn from this material that within a purely oral tradition, names (sometimes in connection with graves) and formulas of datable historical persons may go back about 150 years, that is, more than the 80 years of the normal oral memory, and that there may be some figures of founders from an even more distant past.[15] For the most part, however, 'historical memory' seems to be confined to the normal memory of about 80 years.

In Ancient Greece similar phenomena can be observed. In some sources of the 6th and 5th centuries BC we find family traditions that do not go back more than 80 years. In order to extend them, many attempts have been made to link them to the time of which Homer tells, sometimes by means of invented persons. Rosalind Thomas, following Goody, has described this method as 'telescoping'.[16]

Jan Assmann, in his influential book *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis* (*The Cultural Memory*), has attempted to transfer to Homeric epic Vansina's concept of the floating gap. He identifies the floating gap with the dark ages between the destruction of the Mycenaean palaces and the time of Homer, that is, the period between 1100 and 800 BC.[17] However, seri-

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[13] Cope (1968: 70, 72).

[14] Cf. Bryant (1929: 21ff.) concerning the uncertain identification of the graves of the Zulu kings. Unfortunately, it is impossible to get a sufficient picture of the reliability and duration of oral traditions among the Zulus from this important book. On pp. 29ff. he draws interesting parallels between the oral tradition mentioned by Herodotos and and that of the Zulus and other illiterate peoples.

[15] Cf. the examples adduced by Schott (1968: 166ff., esp. 177ff.).

[16] Cf. Thomas (1989: *passim*).

[17] Assmann (1992: 48ff.)

ous doubts may arise about this identification. In the Homeric epics we can find no description of the present or the recent past, nor is there any treatment of the time of origin. The topic is the Mycenaean period, regardless of the degree of historical accuracy. It is only in the Hesiodic poems that the time of origin is a central theme. Several stories are related about the creation of mankind by Zeus or Pandora, and cosmological legends tell of the power struggles of generations of gods. In the Homeric epics there are very few allusions to the struggles of the gods. One gets the impression that in the Homeric epics, the past is open-ended. Furthermore there are no explicit genealogical connections between the narrated past and the present, in contrast to the examples quoted by Vansina and others from oral literature. It is often suggested, in regard to some poetic characters of the *Iliad*, that the poet has in mind a genealogical connection with some noble families of his own time.[18] However, this has never been proved and there is not the slightest evidence for a Homeric interest in linking narrated events with the present. In this respect the Homeric epics cannot be compared to purely oral traditions. Early Greek epic is fixated upon the Myceneaen period, which means that its content is based not only upon communicative memory, but also on historical consciousness, as in the medieval epics. In contrast to the latter, however, in the case of the *Iliad* there is lacking a longer written tradition that goes back to the beginnings of the legend.

If the historical memory underlying the *Iliad* does not go back much further than 80 years, one must ask what are the facts upon which the historical consciousness of the *Iliad* is based. At the time of the poem's composition, there was no long tradition in writing and no literate culture to convey historical details to the oral tradition (as there was in the Middle Ages), and so only the conspicuous relics of the past could evoke an impression of another age, different from the present. These would include, for instance, the ruins of Mycenae, Tiryns and Troy, and also many preserved objects like the boars' tusk helmet or 'Nestor's cup',[19] old weapons, gold artefacts from Mycenaean graves and so on. The mighty ruins of the palaces would have been very impressive compared with the modest culture of the 8th or 7th centuries, and would surely have stimulated the imagination. Even if the singers and poets did not possess a precise sense of history, there can be no doubt that al-

[18] Cf. Kullmann (1960: 283 n. 1); Kullmann (1992: 86f.).

[19] Patzek (1992: 196ff.) doubts the 'Mycenaean' character of Nestor's cup.

though they did not consider the period they were narrating as a time of origin, they did consider it as historically distinct from their present.

Provided that this assumption is correct, the historical core of the *Iliad* must be regarded as being relatively small, much smaller than in the epics of the Middle Ages. The palaces in both the Greek homeland and the Troad are historical and represent past cultures, but the idea of a campaign between the two would not be historical. By fixing its narration in the time of the palaces of Mycenae and Troy, the *Iliad* (along with other epics of the Trojan War) would presuppose or create a certain historical consciousness, but this would not be an absolute date, but rather a date freely suspended, as it were, between the time of origin and the present time. It would be impossible to speak of homeostasis and the 'floating gap', because there is no explicit reference to the recent past, and the distance to the present remains undefined. If a longer or shorter oral tradition of the legend of the Trojan War existed (as is very probable), there was no floating gap in respect of the date of the legendary war in the course of time. The Trojan War retained its absolute chronological place through its connection with the ruins of Mycenae and Troy.

I shall now provide some detailed considerations in support of my claim that there is only a limited historical consciousness evident in the *Iliad.*

Projections from the Recent Past to the Mycenaean Age

1. The geography of the Catalogue of Ships and the Trojan Catalogue

The political geography of the Mycenaean age, such as we can reconstruct it from the Linear-B tablets, was quite different from that of the Catalogue of Ships. Certainly, the existence of the great centres of Mycenae and Pylos in the *Iliad* can be understood as a reminiscence of the Mycenaean age. However, the borders of the kingdoms of Pylos and Mycenae as indicated by the Linear-B tablets were different from the political boundaries described by Homer.[20]

I have pointed out elsewhere that the geographical situation represented in the Catalogue of Ships can most easily be understood if it is compared with the political situation of the Greek homeland in the 7th

20 Cf. Heubeck (1984: 39ff.).

and 6th centuries BC.[21] This picture is disturbed only by the description of the territories of Mycenae and Pylos, from which, according to the poet, came the large contingents of 100 and 90 ships under the respective commands of Agamemnon and Nestor (*Il.* 2.576, 602). The kingdom of Agamemnon especially, extending from Corinth to the north of Argos, seems to be an artificial creation. One does not know how the poet viewed it in relation to the kingdom of Diomedes in Argos. It does not possess a harbour in the south of the Peloponnese. The natural sequence of the contingents is interrupted by the inclusion of its description, as the poet deals with it after Argos and before Sparta, although from a geographical point of view it would be logical to consider Sparta immediately after Argos.

The description of the territory of Pylos is quite unclear. It would seem either that the poet did not possess a precise idea of the locality of the palace, or that the palace was not visible at all in his lifetime. The description has nothing whatever to do with the Mycenaean period when the provinces of Pylos 'this side of Aikoraija' and 'beyond Aikoraija' included parts of Messenia. Around 700 BC (the presumed lifetime of the poet or the singers who lived immediately before him), mighty remains of Troy VI and Troy VII could still be seen. However, the singers did not know that all palaces on the Greek mainland had been destroyed around 1200 BC, whereas Troy VII survived until about 1000 BC; only then did Troy become a ruin, to be resettled by Greeks. The culmination of the Mycenaean culture prior to the destruction of the palaces and the first—perhaps hostile—contact between the Greeks and Troy some centuries later, when Aeolians settled in the Troad, coincide in the construction of the Trojan War that we find in the early Greek epics, a construction with no fixed date.

The mention of the Herakleidai Tlepolemos (coming from Rhodes, *Il.* 2.653ff.) and Pheidippos and Antiphos (grandsons of Herakles coming from the Dodecanese, *Il.* 2.676ff.) must be understood as a reminiscence of the Dorian migration, which definitely took place a long time after the destruction of the palaces of Mycenae, Tiryns and Pylos, which is to say in the more recent past. This reference is a manifest anachronism. There is also a direct reminiscence of the Dorian migration that probably belongs to the communicative knowledge of the poet; that is, it is known

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21 For details see Kullmann (1993: 129ff.).

to him by hearsay. The Thessalian area of the Ainianes includes Dodona, the famous seat of the oracle in Western Greece (*Il.* 2.748ff.). Apparently the Ainianes emigrated from there to Thessaly. One could speak of a historical short-term memory. The description of the Athenian contingent seems to presuppose a relatively late *synoikismos* because Athens alone is mentioned as an Attic town (*Il.* 2.546ff.).

There are also other valid memories of the recent past in the *Iliad.* In the catalogues most of the towns of Asia Minor are missing (Smyrna, Ephesos, Kolophon etc). This omission betrays a consciousness of the fact that Aeolians and Ionians immigrated to Asia Minor only after the Trojan War.[22] In the *Iliad,* there is no extant memory of there already being Greek settlers in Asia Minor in Mycenaean times. In the Trojan Catalogue (*Il.* 2.867) barbarophone Carians are said to occupy Miletos; this is perhaps wrongly extrapolated from there having been significant numbers of Carians among the Milesian population at the time of the poet. He seems to have believed that the Carians belonged to the original population and were therefore ranged on the Trojan side.

It emerges that the principle of homeostasis, although not applicable to the narration of the epics in general, is however valid in respect of all secondary features. This becomes especially clear when one considers the fact that in the epics no evidence can be found of even the slightest knowledge of the destruction of the Mycenaean palaces or its cause. There is archaeological evidence that all the palaces were destroyed by fire resulting from enemy action, but no epic or mythological tradition about these events is extant. Perhaps the sea peoples mentioned in the Egyptian sources were responsible for this catastrophe.[23] In contrast to this, the destruction of Troy may reflect the colonial experience of Aeolian settlers with their enemies. The correct response depends on the clarification of whether the Greek settlement of Troy immediately followed the non-Greek settlement[24] or whether it was separated from it by a longer period of non-settlement.[25]

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22 Cf. Kullmann (1993: 136ff.): Prinz (1979: 326); Patzek (1992: 111 and 154). According to Latacz (1997: 26ff.) the exclusion of most of the towns of Asia Minor from the Iliadic catalogues reflects a historical situation before 1100 BC because after that time there were Greek settlers in these areas. However, in historical times the Greeks in Asia Minor always thought (rightly or wrongly) that they had immigrated after the time of the Trojan War (cf. Strabo, Book 14). The argument of Latacz is thus not conclusive.

23 Cf. Haider (1988: 47ff.); Lehmann (1985).

24 Cf. Hertel (1992: 73ff.).

25 This is the opinion of Manfred Korfmann who follows Ch. Blegen, the American

2. Family structures and genealogies

The description of family structures confirms our thesis that there is no larger historical knowledge in the Homeric poems. The epics distinguish between three generations: the fathers of the warriors, the warriors themselves and their sons who could not yet participate in the war. As I have said, the narrated time is considered as open-ended into the past. The poet says that Nestor survived two generations and ruled in the third (*Il.* 1.250ff.), and he lets him speak of earlier people who lived up to 80 years before without existing in a time of origin. This corresponds to Assmann's concept of communicative memory. The heroes of the other epic cycles belong to the generation of the fathers; Herakles, the Argonauts, the Seven against Thebes and the participants in the hunting of the Calydonian Boar. One forms the impression that it was the poet of the *Iliad* who for the first time consciously connected these legends with the quasi-historical fixed point of the Trojan War. The generation of the children does not possess such a prominent place in the myth, but is defined as it were by the generation of the fathers: the names of Neoptolemos and Telemachos seem to be chosen after the names of their fathers. The prototype is probably Euneos, the son of Hypsipyle of Lemnos that Jason fathered before he sailed away (*Il.* 7.468f.). Born after his father's departure, he was named from him as "the man with the good ship" (i.e. the *Argo*).[26] The *Odyssey* refers only to the youthfulness of Telemachos.

There is no attempt to connect the world of the heroes with the present time. It is often claimed that Aineias is praised because Homer intended to glorify him as the ancestor of a noble family living in his time. This has never been proved. The poet alludes to Aineas' escape from burning Troy, but in this he is merely following the legend of the capture of the city that is mentioned in the excerpt of Proclus taken from the *Iliupersis* (§ 88).[27] This means that it is an allusion to a legend that predates the *Iliad*.[28] This allusion must be seen together with the fall of Troy and the ruse of the Wooden Horse (*Il.* 15.70f.),[29] which also refer to the stories of the *Iliupersis*. I mentioned before that this legend possi-

excavator: Korfmann (1995: 4): "It still appears that for a long time between the late 11th and 8th cent. BCE Troia/Ilios/Ilion was scarcely, or at least not intensively, occupied."

26 Kullmann (1992: 127).

27 I refer to the numbering of paragraphs used in Kullmann (1960: 52ff.).

28 Cf. Kullmann (1960: 342); Kullmann (1992: 86f.).

29 Kullmann (1960: 340).

bly reflects the conflicts of the immigrating Aeolians with indigenous people. Perhaps the rôle of Aineias has something to do with the foundation of New Ilion. The extraordinarily long genealogy of seven generations ending with Aineias points in the same direction (*Il.* 20.215ff.). Yet, a direct link to the present is missing. The genealogies in the pseudo-Hesiodic Catalogues confirm that the archaic poets are interested only in mythical genealogy. Even the prose authors of the 6th and 5th centuries carry on this tradition for the most part,[30] in that they are guided by a more playful interest.[31] One of the first attempts to follow down through the mythical genealogies to the present was made by Pherekydes with regard to the Philaid genealogy (*FGrHist* 3 F 2).[32]

There are still other genealogies that are relatively long. Yet we cannot find any indication of additional historical knowledge. In three cases, we can see that the lines of ancestors are connected to tribal and political speculations. Aiolos belongs to the table of the Greek tribes. Dardanos is the progenitor of the inhabitants of the Troad, and Pelops the progenitor of the Peloponnesian population.

The extent to which family relationships in the epics are constructions can be clearly seen from the following three examples: the Atreidai, the descendants of Bellerophontes and the Herakleidai. The Atreidai are of special interest. As I have pointed out elsewhere, the *Iliad* locates Agamamenon in Mycenae, but also shows awareness of the version that he resided in Sparta together with Menelaos and ruled over Messenia.[33] Otherwise, Agamemnon's attempt to reconcile Achilleus by offering him seven Messenian cities (*Il.* 9.149ff.) would be unintelligible. He could do this only as a king of Sparta. This means that the poet anachronistically presupposes the result of the First Messenian War that led to the extinction of Messene. For him the major power of Sparta was a firm political factor. Besides, as I have just mentioned, the Catalogue of Ships places the kingdoms of the two brothers, Agamemnon and Menelaos, close together. The *Odyssey* follows the main version of the *Iliad* that Agamemnon resides in Mycenae (*Od.*3.304f.), but also shows awareness of the legend of a double kingdom of the two Atreidai in Sparta. This can be deduced from the curious fact that according to the

30 According to F. Jacoby *FGrHist* I a, p. 317 (Comm. on Hekataios T 4), it is not provable that the family trees in the *Genealogies* of Hekataios continued to the present.

31 Cf. West (1985: 1ff.).

32 Cf. Thomas (1989: 155ff.); especially the Philaid genealogy 161ff.

33 Cf. Kullmann (1992: 166ff.); Kullmann (1993: 140ff.).

Odyssey Agamemnon is at Cape Maleia on his way home when he is driven back by a storm to the Argolis so that—against his original intention, as it seems—he goes ashore in the Argolis (*Od.* 4.514ff.). Another indication is Nestor's narration, when Telemachos visits him. According to Nestor, Menelaos was coming home from Troy and—surprisingly for the reader / listener of the *Odyssey*—met Orestes, precisely on the very day when Orestes was arranging a funeral repast for Aigisthos and his mother, both of whom he had killed, (*Od.* 3.311ff.). Here again the idea seems to emerge that Menelaos lives in the same city as Agamemnon's family. Shortly before, it is related in the *Odyssey* that Nestor is convinced that Menelaos, had he met Aigisthos when the latter was still alive, would not have buried him after his death, but would have left him to the dogs and birds (*Od.* 3.255ff.). In all these passages a shared residence for the Atreidai is presupposed. Later Pindar, Stesichoros and Simonides expressly place Agamamenon in Amyklai in Laconia. There is much to be said for the assumption that prior to the composition of the *Iliad* Agamemnon and Menelaos served as mythical examples of the Spartan double kingdom, although they were never linked to the lists of Spartan kings. Agamemnon's 'settlement' in Mycenae, as opposed to Sparta, belongs to the time when hero cults were established at anonymous Mycenaean graves,[34] and when perhaps the heroon of Agamemnon at Mycenae was built.[35] This means that the combination Agamemnon + Mycenae is not old, but new. The relationship of Agamemnon to Laconia seems to be older, though in comparison with the Mycenaean culture it is very late because it presupposes the Dorian migration. Similar suggestions have already been made by scholars like Eduard Schwartz[36] and Erich Bethe,[37] but these considerations have been dismissed even by serious scholars, perhaps because of the fascination of the traditional view. The tragedians were not unanimous in determining the seat of the Atreidai. At least Aeschylus assumes a double kingdom of the Atreidai (perhaps following the *Nostoi*), but displaces it—apparently for political reasons—to Argos instead of Sparta.

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[34] Cf. Coldstream (1976: 8ff.); Coldstream (1977:341ff.), and the corrections of Patzek (1992: 170ff.).

[35] Cf. Cook (1957). According to him the heroon of Agamemnon at Mycenae was founded only at the end of the 8th century BC (cf. Hertel [1992: 75 n. 13]).

[36] Schwartz (1901).

[37] Bethe (1966).

The genealogy of Glaukos, which comprises six generations (*Il.* 6.153ff.), contains some peculiarities. In contrast to other genealogies of the Homeric epics, a complicated story is connected with one of the ancestors, with Bellerophontes, the grandfather of Glaukos. The fate of Bellerophontes is an emigrant's lot, although we are unable to explain it adequately. About Lykia not much is known. At any rate in the context of this story two oriental motifs occur that we know from the *Old Testament*. The calumniation of Bellerophontes by Anteia has a parallel in Joseph's temptation by Potiphar's wife in *Moses* 1.39; the tablet with the evil signs sent by Proitos to his father-in-law in Lykia has a parallel in the story of the letter concerning Uriah that is related in *Samuel* 2.11.[38] Apart from these motifs, there are further similarities between the fate of Bellerophontes' family and the fate of Jacob's descendants (one of whom is Joseph) told in *Genesis* 1.38, to which Franz Dorseiff drew our attention 60 years ago.[39] Just as the descendants of Bellerophontes have to suffer the effects of the gods' hatred for their father, (Isandros and Laodameia are killed by Ares and Artemis and only Glaukos' father survives), God does not like the sons of Judah, the brother of Joseph, and he lets Er and Onan die. The parallel is not apparent in all details, but the comparison with *Genesis* is nevertheless instructive.[40] Apparently, underlying the names of the descendants of Bellerophontes there are stories that may have been transmitted to the Greeks by Phoenicians, much as were the motifs of Potiphar's wife and the letter of Uriah. This transmission must belong to the time when the Greeks took over the alphabet from the Phoenicians, for there is no reason to believe that it occurred in Mycenaean times. It is only the communicative memory of the poet that may have known something about cultural relations with the east in the recent past, and may have been responsible for the integration of these details into the *Iliad.* Ultimately, the motifs are derived from the eastern literary tradition, and they are now combined with the lineage of Sisyphos, son of Aiolos.

I include a small digression. The new excavations of Manfred Korfmann at Troy have inspired some scholars to look at possible connections between Homer and Anatolia. After the discovery of a seal with a

[38] Cf. Heubeck (1979).
[39] Cf. Dornseiff (1934: 72).
[40] The passages referred to from the *Old Testament* may themselves be later than the *Iliad*, but they seem to reproduce older sources.

Luvian inscription at Troy it has been suggested that the *Iliad* may be influenced by a Luvian poetic tradition. But serious doubt must be cast on this,[41] for the Luvian dialect belongs to Southern Anatolia. On the other hand, there exists a conspicuous onomastic parallel between a certain vassal of the Hittite king, Alaksandus by name, ruling at the beginning of the 13th century BC in a city called Wilusa, and Alexandros as the name of a prince of Ilion.[42] Alaksandus is probably a Greek name (in the 2nd millenium presumably many Greeks lived in Asia Minor). Whether Wilusa has anything to do with Ilion is questionable. The possibility that the name of a ruler of Troy VI (!) around 1280 BC was transmitted by Greek oral poetic tradition can be ruled out. What cannot be discounted, at least in principle, is that Greek singers in the 8th or 7th centuries BC introduced the name of an ancient ruler of Troy, bearing a Greek name, into their epics to give them some local colour. But we have no evidence whatsoever that the name of a King Alaksandus was current among the Anatolian population at the time of the Greek singers and could therefore have been borrowed by them. Thus, the evidence is still too vague to be taken into consideration.

I return once more to the Herakleidai, because their family trees seem to have a political significance. If in the Catalogue of Ships Pheidippos and Antiphos are mentioned as leaders of the contingents of Nisyros, Karpathos, Kos and Kalydnai and are introduced as sons of the Herakleides Thessalos (*Il.* 2.676ff.), one should probably draw the following historico-political conclusion: the eponym of Thessaly is a Dorian and Thessaly received its name only after the Trojan War from the immigration of Antiphos, being then settled by the Dorians (the immigration of Thessalos is referred to by Apollodoros, *Epit.* 6.15b, probably following an epic source).[43] From a historical point of view this is an absurdity. But we have to accept a tendency towards archaising in the *Iliad.* A son

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[41] Cf. Neumann (1995) against Siebler (1995: 37).

[42] Cf. Güterbock (1986); Watkins (1986); Watkins (1995: 144ff). It seems to me unprovable that the Luvian text of the 16th century which contains the word 'wilusati' without its being marked as a place name has something to do with Wilusa in the Hittite texts of the 13th century. Neumann (1995: 10) translates it as follows: "vom Weideland, von der Alm" (from the [alpine] pasture). In a recent paper Starke (1997: 447ff.) argues again for an identification of Ilion with Wilusa and tries to explain questions of Anatolian history in the 2nd millennium BC by reference to Homeric parallels. This is not convincing, as there is an enormous chronological gap between the Anatolian texts and the tradition of the Greek singers.

[43] Cf. Kullmann (1960: 108, 389); Kullmann (1993: 135f.).

of Herakles named Thessalos, who lives outside Thessaly at the time of the Trojan War, appears to be a well-calculated anachronism by the poet. Besides, the name of the main city of Thessaly, Larissa, is missing in the Catalogue of Ships. Instead, a Pelasgian city named Larissa is mentioned as a Trojan ally in the Trojan Catalogue (*Il.* 2.841). The inhabitants are certainly immigrants who moved from Thessaly in the course of the Aeolian migration, and so another anachronism concerning the Thessalians is laid bare.[44]

3. *Idealization of the Past*[45]

If the world of the *Iliad*, despite its obvious relation to the political situation of the 7th century, appears to be different from this period, it is due to the poet's idealisation of the Mycenaean past that makes the warriors of the Trojan War appear as a peculiar race of men, who differ considerably from the people of his own time. Several times the achievements of the heroes are distinguished from the normal standard, "as mortals are today" (*Il.* 5.304, 12.383, 449, 20.287). In 12.23, it is said that the rivers of the Troad have become the mass grave "of the race of the demigods." This means that the poet of the *Iliad* uses the pattern known to us from Hesiod (*Works & Days* 156ff), in which the race of the heroes and demigods precedes the iron race of the present. People who are able to erect such huge walls must be some other kind of human being. From this point of view, the technique of fighting in the *Iliad* is of special interest.[46] The efforts of scholars to explain it coherently from a realistic point of view have been unsuccessful. We find mass fighting at close range (phalanx-technique, *synaspismos* or something of the sort) as well as the scattered duels of the champions sometimes accompanied by long speeches. These two types of fighting do not harmonize with each other, but the poetic conception becomes clear if we realize that the conjunction is an expression of the tension that existed between the ideas of the nobility in the archaic period and the requirements of the defence of the polis. The nobility is oriented towards autonomy and self-realization, while the polis needs the solidarity of all citizens. The poet tries to do justice to both sides, but predominantly he sympathizes with

[44] Cf. Kullmann (1993: 143).
[45] Cf. Kullmann (1995a: 59ff.).
[46] Cf. Latacz (1977); van Wees (1992); Janko (1992: 59f); K. Hellmann (Freiburg i.Br.) is preparing a thesis on this subject.

the nobility by projecting the ideal of the independent aristocrat into the heroic age of the palaces.

4. Loose alliance[47]

From the Catalogue of Ships and many other passages, it can be seen that the Achaian army that besieges Troy consists of a loose coalition of 29 contingents of autonomous states that have only temporarily put themselves under the command of Agamemnon. They are bound by oaths to support each other (*Il.* 2.339). According to the legend, the cause is the wooing of Helen during which the candidates committed themselves to defending the matrimony of the chosen bridegroom (see Apollodoros 3.10.9, who perhaps follows the *Cypria*). This loose coalition corresponds to the political situation that we can presuppose for the time of the poet of the *Iliad.* A Panhellenic feeling existed, which found expression for instance in the Olympic games, but no real political unity.[48] It is highly improbable that such a divided army would have been able to conduct such a campaign as is described in the *Iliad.* The image given by Homer contradicts everything that the Mycenaean archaeological finds reveal about the considerable extent of the territories in the Mycenaean age. Besides, in general terms, and with reference to the principle of (secondary) homeostasis, it is inconceivable that the comprehensive historical perspective of the *Iliad*, which pertains to world history and expresses itself in the idea of a campaign of the Greek mainland against Asiatic Troy, could have been maintained in the tradition during the dark ages and revitalized about 700 BC in an epic.[49] This perspective can have come into existence only after the awakening of Panhellenic thought, about 700 BC.

5. Communication between the states[50]

The epics about the Trojan War draw a detailed picture of the recruitment of the Achaian contingents. On the divine plane Hera refers in the *Iliad* to the trouble she had had in assembling the people (*Il.* 4.26ff.). Nestor's visit to Peleus, which was designed to achieve the participation

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[47] Cf. Kullmann (1995a: 62ff.).
[48] Cf. Kullmann (1993: 132ff.).
[49] Cf. Patzek (1992: 99f). See Kullmann (1995b: 161ff.).
[50] Cf. Kullmann (1993: 139f.).

of Achilleus, is mentioned several times (*Il.* 7.127f., 9.252ff., 338f. and 11.765ff.). According to *Odyssey* 24.104, 114ff., Agamemnon and Menelaos canvassed for support at Ithaka where they lived in the house of Amphimedon. According to Proclus' summary (§ 19-22) the *Cypria* reported extensively how Agamemnon and Menelaos persuaded the Achaian leaders to join the campaign.[51] Helpful for understanding the assembling of the Achaians at Aulis as narrated in the Catalogue of Ships is the study of Giovannini, according to which the *Iliad* presupposes written itineraries of the kind that were later in use at Delphi, drawn up for the envoys who would announce the Pythian games and proclaim a truce in the Greek world.[52] At an early date a similar procedure must have existed in respect of the Olympic games. The degree of inter-Greek communication that is characteristic of the world described in the Homeric epics corresponds fairly exactly to the degree of communication necessary for the organization of common Greek festivals and games: this is actually attested to in inscriptions from the 7th century onward.

6. *Individual and Polis*[53]

The individualism of the Achaian leaders does not fit in very well with the campaign described by the poet, but is better suited to the striving for independence that is characteristic of the Greek nobility in the archaic period. On the one hand, the *Iliad* refers in unemphasised passages to a sense of solidarity comparable to the ethics of the polis as it is expounded later in the texts of Tyrtaios and Kallinos (*Il.* 9.63f., 12.243, 15.496f.); on the other hand, heroes such as Achilleus are more interested in their own glory than in the welfare of the community. Even for Hektor the well-being of his nuclear family (wife and child) is more important than the welfare of the Trojans as a whole (*Il.* 6.450ff.). So in Homer there is an anticipation of the paradox that is characteristic of the archaic Greek polis: the striving for *eleutheria*, and subordination under the *nomos*—but the poet seems to have a predominant sympathy with the ideas of the nobility.

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[51] On the numbering of paragraphs see above n. 27.

[52] Giovannini (1969: 51ff.).

[53] Cf. Kullmann (1992: 264ff.: "Das Heldenideal der Ilias und die Zeit ihres Dichters"); Kullmann (1995a: 65ff.).

7. Tradition of epic song[54]

We do not know how old the epic tradition about the Trojan War may be. It need not date back beyond 800 BC, but there must have been a tradition of epic song independent of the content of the songs. Forms of song tend to last much longer than their contents. Without doubt, the metre of the hexameter line has a long history. Because the singers within the epic are familiar with different genres (for instance, apart from the performance of epics they know dancing songs that possess a different metrical structure), there is much to be said for the suggestion that the hexameter arose from aeolic metres.[55] For centuries such metres were able to transmit content that was related to war topics as well as poetic formulas.

Summary

Thus we can state, with regard to the basic conception of the *Iliad*, that there is no floating gap as Assmann believed. This epic possesses a historical consciousness. This historical consciousness is constituted of three factors: 1) extrapolations of Greek singers on the basis of the visible walls of Mycenae, Tiryns (and originally perhaps Pylos) and Troy and other ruins from former times; 2) speculations by the Aeolians settling in Asia Minor concerning the time of the decline of Troy that was then inhabited by foreign people; 3) memories of events that had occurred in the more recent past and that were projected back into the time of the ruins, and information passed on by members of literate societies with whom the Greeks were in contact, such as the Phoenicians, the Babylonians[56]—and possibly Anatolians (i.e. Lykians).

On the other hand, it must be admitted that the historical core of the *Iliad* is very small. Only the essential witnesses of the Mycenaean time remain unchanged: the ruins of the palaces,[57] some single pieces of old bronze weapons that were still extant; perhaps also old pieces such as Nestor's cup and the boars' tusk helmet (although even this is disputed),

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[54] Cf. Kullmann (1995a: 71).

[55] This seems to be confirmed by Indo-European parallels. Cf. Schmitt (1967: 307ff.); Nagy (1974).

[56] Cf.—in respect of *Il.* 14.198ff.—Webster (1958: 86); Walcot (1966: 34); Burkert (1984: 88ff.); Kullmann (1992: 106).

[57] Pylos remains a major area. See above p.102.

and then the old Mycenaean graves and perhaps some grave findings (cf. the epithet of Agamemnon "king of golden Mycenae", *Il.* 7.180, 11.46). Thus one must take into account a second degree homeostasis and floating gap, as it were, that concerns all the details of human life, though not the bare fact of the Mycenaean culture. These details are shaped according to the contemporary experiences of the singers and poets in the 8th and 7th century BC.

As for the historicity of Homer's report, it is unimportant how old the epic tradition may be. The historical significance that according to Homer the campaign against Troy seems to possess cannot have been mediated by epic tradition, even if the tradition might go back to the time of the alleged capture of the citadel. The content of the Trojan epics is "constructed history". It is not merely fictional, not wholly invented, but rather extrapolated from relatively few remains.

CHAPTER SIX

THE BYSTANDER AT THE RINGSIDE: RING-COMPOSITION IN EARLY GREEK POETRY AND ATHENIAN BLACK-FIGURE VASE-PAINTING

Anne Mackay, Deirdre Harrison and Samantha Masters

Ring-composition is ubiquitous in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and its specific function has long been debated.[1] It has been presented as evidence both of oral and of literary composition; it has been identified as a functional mnemonic device for the oral poet, and as an aesthetic structuring principle.[2] It is a contrastive device; an enclosing, framing device, focusing attention on a central element; a dividing device to mark off digressions and the like from the main thrust of the narrative; a device for imposing unity on disparate elements: *quot homines, tot sententiae*.

Athenian black-figure vase-painting in the sixth century BC constitutes a self-standing visual tradition that is in many ways parallel to the early Greek oral (i.e. oral-derived) tradition in the way meaning is constructed in a narrative context. As past studies have shown,[3] comparisons drawn between the richly diachronic evidence presented by the vase-painting tradition as it develops through the sixth century and the Homeric evidence, which one might say fossilises a particular stage

[1] The initial studies of ring-composition in early Greek poetry were those of van Otterlo (1944, 1948). Subsequent major studies include Notopoulos (1951), van Groningen (1957, 1958), Whitman (1958). Peabody (1975) looks at ring-composition in Hesiod. More recently, Lord (1986a) examines ring structures in South Slavic oral poetry. Stanley (1993) offers an in-depth analysis of ring-composition in the *Iliad*, drawing the conclusion that the complexities are such that the poem must be literary rather than oral. Minchin (1995) suggests that ring-composition is a phenomenon of most oral discourse. See also Nimis in this volume.

[2] See particularly Lord (1986a) and Stanley (1993). Lord, in reference to the living South Slavic oral epic tradition, shows that in a cultural milieu offering both oral tradition and literacy, structural devices may have more than one function: mnemonic and aesthetic. Stanley opts for literary artistry.

[3] This paper is one of a series exploring various comparisons between the visual and verbal traditions. Previous studies have examined innovation (Mackay [1996a]), and formulaic and thematic parallels (Mackay [1995]) preceded initially by a comparative overview of the potential for such analysis (Mackay [1993a]).

(and, as most would agree, a late one) in the evolution of the oral poetic tradition, have the potential to inform scholarship in both fields. The present paper will analyse enclosing structural devices in painting that are notably similar to poetic ring-composition, with the aim of revealing parallels in form and suggesting parallels in function.

In early Greek art, symmetry and repetition are the pervasive principles in figured decoration from the geometric period through to near the end of the archaic period. Analysis of the organisation of motifs on monumental geometric vases reveals, both in the arrangement of bands of motifs and in the arrangement of motifs within a field, symmetrical patterns that can be identified as a visual version of ring-composition, with a centrally-placed dominant motif being framed between matched pairs of subsidiary motifs.[4] At the same time it is characteristic of geometric vase painting that precisely repeated motifs are set in bands running right round the vase circumference. In the eighth century, painters introducing naturally-inspired motifs such as deer and goats and waterbirds replicated them too, placing them nose-to-tail in bands around the vase, and thus treating them like abstract motifs; there is a difference, however, since the normal abstract repertoire of triangles, lozenges, or even the various maeander-forms does not convey a strong sense of movement towards one side or the other, while creatures seen from the side with a head at one end are clearly identified as heading one way or the other, with a resulting impression of direction.

Around the middle of the eighth century, the Dipylon Master and his school introduced human figures in funereal contexts, retaining the two categories of repetition and symmetry: set in enclosing panels are *prothesis* or *ekphora* scenes where symmetry is the overriding principle,[5] while bands may include a series of repeated horses and chariots arranged around the vase.[6] Like deer, goats and waterbirds, chariot groups are represented as seen from the side, in profile, and so can be faced either to our left or to our right. In the eighth century there seems already to have developed a convention that they should regularly face

[4] For detailed analyses of geometric decoration in comparison with Homeric structures, see Andreae and Flashar (1977) and Lewis (1981). For a general study of symmetry from the geometric to the late archaic period, see Scheibler (1960).

[5] For instance the *prothesis* scene on the Dipylon Amphora (Athens 804), and the *ekphora* scene on the Athens krater (Athens 990). On the relationship between image and frame, see Hurwit (1977).

[6] E.g. the chariot-band below the *ekphora* on the Athens krater (Athens 990).

to the right. Facing to the right naturally implies the potential to move to the right, and in the case of a chariot procession where the horses have one leg in advance of the other, clearly movement is to be inferred.[7]

In these monumental Geometric examples the individual motifs can be described as being arranged in parataxis, one next to another, with little or no overlap. The only structuring apparent is *either* the directional *or* the symmetrical arrangement of the repetitious figures.[8] It is axiomatic that in early Greek epic poetry one of the defining characteristics of oral composition as evidenced by the Homeric poems is parataxis, both grammatical and conceptual. In strict parataxis, the sequence continues with one unsubordinated item following another, whether visually or verbally; it can most easily be structured by creating symmetrical arrangements through repetition of recognisably like elements in a recognisable pattern: visual symmetry, or verbal ring-composition. In poetry, ring-composition may be simply a matter of returning at the end of a section to elements from its beginning, but more often it is a complex pattern of the A-B-C-X-C-B-A type, marking and emphasising the central element.[9] As will be shown, similar patterns may be discerned in narrative black-figure vase-painting scenes, and comparison between the visual and verbal traditions may offer insight into the range of functions of this type of structure.

In the seventh century, where animals (including mythological hybrids) formed the dominant motifs on the vase, there was a strong tendency for them to be heraldically arranged;[10] however with the development of mythological narrative in this period, figured scenes became more prominent on Athenian vases, and it seems that exuberant narrative experimentation took precedence over virtually all else. Identification of the mythological situation, usually by means of the uniqueness of the combination of figure-types, seems to have been of paramount im-

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7 That this idea of attempting to represent motion in art is by no means foreign to the early Greek mind can be recognised from the famous descriptions of moving, sounding images on the Shield of Achilleus in *Iliad* 18.

8 Visually, symmetry seems to take precedence over direction; in the *ekphora* scene on the Athens krater (Athens 990), the effect of motion and direction presented by the chariot group is all but destroyed by the figures on the right of the scene, which face to left.

9 This is an oversimplification of the Homeric range of patterns which can involve chiasmus as well as enclosure; some similar variations in archaic vase-scenes will be discussed below.

10 This phenomenon is analysed by Scheibler (1960).

portance, so that under the pressure of exploring and exploiting the new narrative potential, compositional symmetry was generally less emphasised. Only in the early years of the sixth century, when the Attic black-figure technique had become formalised, and narrative art established as a budding tradition, did the notion of symmetry reassert itself. At this stage Athenian painters, while continuing to develop narrative scenes as the primary focus on their vases, began in their subsidiary friezes to imitate the Corinthian type of decoration, with rows of animals, birds and mythological hybrid creatures ranged in bands around the vase. Probably in continuity with seventh century animal symmetry, these animals were frequently broken up into groups that were then symmetrically arranged around the vase.

A dinos attributed to Sophilos[11] provides a good example, where the figures in each band are arranged in groups consisting of a centre-piece enclosed within one or more symmetrical frames. This is represented in the diagrammatic analyses below, where each box represents one band of figures, and each line within the box represents a grouping (these lines must, of course, be read continuously following the italicised capital letters at line-ends).

TOP BAND

→ → → ^^^^ ← ← ←
A Lion + Siren + Man + Chariot + Man + Siren + Panther *B*

←
B Bird *C*

→ ( ) ←
C Lion + Floral + Lion *D*

→ ←
D Boar + Boar *A*

In the top band the focal point is the frontal chariot, itself symmetrical by nature, framed by a matching pair of inward-turned male figures who do not seem to have any obvious function in the scene other than to direct attention towards the chariot. The symmetry is further emphasised

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11 Louvre E 873: *ABV* 39.12; *Add.*^{2} 10; for photographic illustration see Bakir (1981: pll. 46–48).

by additional framing figures: rather incongruously, to the modern perception, a pair of inward-facing sirens and then a pair of felines. Two further symmetrical groups complete the band: more or less opposite the frontal chariot, there is a floral between two lions (*C*-*D*), and two confronted boars (*D*-*A*). The bird (*B*-*C*) is not part of a group, and was perhaps added to fill up the remaining space.

SECOND BAND

→ → ( ) ← ←
E Panther + Boar + Floral + Boar + Lion *F*

→ → ← ←
F Panther + Siren + Siren + Ram *G*

→ ←
G Siren + Siren *E*

The groupings of the second band are entirely symmetrical, and its central points are in relation to those of the top band: here the elaborate lotus and palmette device provides further central emphasis directly under the chariot, and this is in turn framed by a pair of inward-facing boars. More or less opposite, on the far side of the vase, there is a similar symmetrical effect but reversed in an almost contrapuntal pattern, with the floral above in the top band and the framing sirens below in the second band.

THIRD BAND

→ → ← ←
H Panther + Siren + Siren + Panther *I*

→ ←
I Siren + Siren *J*

← ← → →
J Boar + Panther + Boar + Duck *H*

Even in the third band, less obvious on the under-curve of the dinos, the symmetry does not fail, although the duck seems to be rather a makeweight (supporting the suggestion above that the bird in the top band is added to fill left-over space).

On the large vases of this sort produced in the first two decades of the sixth century, there is usually an emphasis established at a given point on the circumference, and often a lesser one at the point more or less diametrically opposed. Elaborate florals are regularly used as emphasising markers.[12] Symmetrical enclosure thus tends to impose a structure on what otherwise might have been a seamless directional procession of nose-to-tail animals. It is in this kind of structuring that one may identify a visual ring-composition, and perceive that it fulfils a double function: in the first instance the imposition of structure seems intended merely to create a sense of order in the patterns, but where there is a central element framed by multiple pairs of matched figures, additionally a strong emphasis is laid on the enclosed item, as in the chariot in the top band above, and it is surely not coincidental that this emphasised element tends to be distinct from its surroundings, often by being human-oriented. Since there is no recognisable narrative intent in these examples, it must be concluded that symmetrical enclosure was a natural way of structuring an otherwise paratactical group of elements.

A similar preference for symmetrical enclosure is to be observed in the same period in the arrangement of the main narrative scenes. For instance, there are two distinct contexts in the continuous topmost band of the name vase of the Gorgon Painter (see box on facing page):[13] an unidentifiable (symmetrical) duel, and the readily identifiable narrative of Perseus and the Gorgons, which is entirely directional, with spectators, pursuit and escape all to right, is symmetrically enclosed at either end by the inward-facing horses of two chariots. These in fact belong to the duel on the far side, as is indicated by the charioteers' looking back over their shoulders at the fight. The chariots thus serve two functions: to enclose each of the two scenes, and to mark them off as separate entities.

The framing of the Perseus scene identifies it as a narrative unit, and what lies within the frame may then be considered as an entity open to interpretation. Indeed the directionality seems to allow the possibility of

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[12] The François Vase (Florence 4209: *ABV* 76.1, 682; *Para.* 29; *Add.*^{2} 21) well exemplifies this: it has as the central focus of each side an heraldic arrangement of hybrid creatures framing a lotus and palmette design: on the obverse, a pair of sphinxes, and on the reverse, griffins. For a detailed analysis of such heraldic symmetry see Scheibler (1960).

[13] Louvre E 874: *ABV* 8.1, 679; *Para.* 6; *Add.*^{2} 2; a clear illustration may be found in Beazley (1986: pl.14).

TOP BAND OF GORGON PAINTER'S NAME VASE: LOUVRE E 874

	(→)	→	→	→	→	→	→	(←)	
A	(Chariot) +	Hermes +	Athene +	Medusa +	Gorgon +	Gorgon +	Perseus +	(Chariot)	*B*

	←	↔	→	←	↔	→	
B	Chariot +	Charioteer +	Warrior +	Warrior +	Charioteer +	Chariot	*A*

reading the action from left to right *through time*: Hermes and Athene have given their support to Perseus, who has beheaded Medusa and thus aroused her sisters into pursuit from which he is now fleeing. Although the time element is not in this case very pronounced, a little later in the development of the black-figure tradition it is more obviously exploited, as for instance on the François Vase, a large volute krater signed by Kleitias as painter and produced around 570 BC, a time when mythological narrative had become established in the black-figure tradition.[14]

While almost all the scenes on this elaborate krater can be analysed in a similar fashion to a greater or lesser extent, the complex narrative scene of Achilleus' ambush and pursuit of Troilos on the fourth band of the obverse offers the best example of the way symmetrical ring-composition is used not only as a structural device but also to convey narrative meaning (see diagram on p. 124). The story is divided into stages that are both distinguished and united by symmetrical or balanced correlation. The central focus is Achilleus' pursuit of Troilos who endeavours to escape to the right on one of his horses while leading the other, and it is no coincidence that here, as on the earlier vases discussed above, a large, elaborate and eye-catching floral device dominates the centre of the (symmetrically grouped) animal band below; this creates a central emphasis for the Achilleus-Troilos cluster directly above in which swift-footed Achilleus overlaps with and is integrated into the same visual unit as his victim, his outstretched leg on the left balancing the reaching forelegs of the horses on the right.

Framing this on the left is the stately, standing figure of Athene to right, seeming to urge on her protégé Achilleus; she is balanced on the right side of the action by another female figure also to right: the fleeing Polyxena, who has dropped her water-jar under the hooves of the horses and is leading the way for her brother Troilos. Within this female Athene/Polyxena balance there is contrast of speed of movement, and of Greek-supporting deity and Trojan mortal. Working outward again, on the left is the Greek-supporting immortal Hermes, walking to right but glancing back over his shoulder towards the fountain-house; he is balanced on the right by another male figure, the Trojan Antenor, also walking to right; the latter's head is not preserved, but one could postu-

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[14] Florence 4209: *ABV* 76.1, 682; *Para.* 29; *Add.*^{2} 21. For photographic illustration see, e.g., Minto (1960).

late that he too may have been glancing back, looking at the catastrophe unfolding behind him as he brings the news of it back to Troy.

So far, as well as having a *balance* of figures around the centrepiece (Greek-supporting deities on the left, Trojan mortals on the right, with male and female correlation), there is also a clear sense of *direction* (given that all the figures are facing or moving to right). As one's eye swings outward once again, it encounters balanced enclosure: on the left is Thetis, mother of Achilleus, facing and gesturing to right (clearly, like Athene, supporting Achilleus). On the right, she is counterbalanced by old Priamos, seated to left outside his palace: here the gender balance observed hitherto gives way to a more complex balance, with the mother of the perpetrator set against the father of the victim, standing immortal female against seated mortal male, figure facing right against figure facing left. Furthermore the directional emphasis noted so far is now enclosed as the figures on each side of the scene face inwards.

From this point on the strict balance breaks down. The delicate architectural structure of the fountain-house on the left is answered by the solid white masonry of Troy on the right. Two armed warriors, Hektor and Polites, emerge grimly to left from the door in the latter, offering at least a numerical balance with the two figures associated with the fountain-house at the left end, but the latter figures, while not elsewhere connected with the myth, seem to be important for the interpretation of the scene. At the left of the fountain-house, a youth named Troon strides to right to place a vessel under one of the lions-head waterspouts, signifying, one might suppose, what Troilos was trying to do himself when he was ambushed—and perhaps the TRO- syllable in common between the two names helps to make this connection. A similar container is already under the second spout, no doubt positioned there by the woman named as Rhodia, who stands on the right of the fountain-house facing to left but looking over her shoulder towards the central action. She is not a standard figure in the myth, and is perhaps an *altera* Polyxena. These two figures seem intended by Kleitias to re-enact the first section of the narrative, the situation immediately *before* the ambush and pursuit, using parallel figures to Troilos and Polyxena to avoid disrupting the logical unity of the scene. Hermes, glancing back over his shoulder, serves as a link between this section and the main pursuit in the middle.[15]

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[15] For this type of figure, which may be termed 'palinopt' (i.e. walking one way but looking back over his shoulder), see below, n. 23 and p. 130ff.

ANALYSIS OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE TROILOS SCENE ON THE FRANÇOIS VASE												
Affiliation	Trojan	Trojan	Trojan	Greek	Greek	Greek	Greek	Trojan	Trojan	Trojan	Trojan	Trojan
Deity / Mortal	D	M	M	D	D	D	M	M	M	M	M	MM
Relation				mother							father	
Gender	♂	♂	♀	♀	♂	♀	♂	♂	♀	♂	♂	♂♂
Direction	→	→	↔	→	↔	→	→	→→	→	↔?	←	←←
Identity	Apollo	Troon	Rhodia	Thetis	Hermes	Athene	Achilleus	Troilos Horses	Polyxena	Antenor	Priamos	Hektor Polites
Building		Fountain House										Troy

Antenor links the centre to the next narrative stage, as his gesture makes it clear that he is announcing the news to Priamos. The two armed warriors, Hektor and Polites, coming from the doorway at the right end of the scene, seem to represent the time *after* the main action, when the news of Troilos' death has been announced and the older brothers are setting out to recover his corpse.[16] In this scene, then, there seems to be a passage of time from left to right, from past through the present to the future; this is reinforced by the overriding sense of direction from left to right conveyed by the preponderance of figures facing or moving to the right in the central section. At the same time the scene is symmetrically composed, with a visual ring-composition that conforms with the traditional expectation of an 'endstopped', enclosed and thus unified scene, and additionally serves an analytical purpose as described above.[17] The complexity of the whole is best analysed diagrammatically, as on the facing page.

The intricate patterns in this scene are indicative of what can be accomplished within an established tradition by an ingenious and highly creative master craftsman. In the early Greek poetic tradition, one can readily find parallel examples where the annular patterns contribute significantly to the construction of meaning in the passage; the much-analysed description of the Shield of Achilleus (*Iliad* 18.478-608) is an obvious choice, where the verbal and conceptual patterning is so complex as to support diverse interpretations and varying conclusions.[18]

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[16] As the black-figure tradition developed, these three narrative sections of the story became separately established as alternative ways of evoking the story (see the categorisation in *LIMC* I: Achilleus, Troilos; also Minto [1960]; Mackay [1996b]).

[17] There remains the figure of Apollo facing and gesturing to right on the far (left) side of the fountain-house. Although he does not play a central role in the literary sources, as a supporter of the Trojan side and (according to one source at least) the father of Troilos, and as the god responsible for the prophecies that in some accounts play a major role in bringing about Troilos' demise, he is by no means irrelevant to the story. Yet he is positioned away from the other Olympian deities, at the extreme left of the scene where it connects with the different scene in the same band on the other side of the vase: the riotous Dionysian thiasos accompanying the Return of Hephaistos to the gathering of Olympians (there is no indication that Apollo was represented among the latter). It seems not impossible that Apollo was intended as a kind of 'hinge-figure' between the two scenes. The other division under the other handle is of course convincingly established by the solid masonry edifice. This is not to suggest any subtle narrative connection between the two scenes: Apollo serves a purely structural function: indeed it is possible that his gesture would have been mirrored by the figure at the left of the Hephaistos scene.

[18] Most recently discussed by Stanley (1993) and Becker (1995), and see Nimis in this volume.

While some have argued that such extreme intricacy cannot have been constructed orally,[19] what is emerging from the consideration of similar patterns in the visual sphere is that in Early Greece, enclosure or ring-composition is the fundamental and natural means of structuring paratactical sequences, whether verbal or visual; lesser practitioners are content with structure for its own sake,[20] while the outstanding masters use the feature, like so many other features of their traditions, as yet another means of conveying their narrative effectively.

The François Vase is indeed one of the most ingenious and sophisticated examples in Attic black-figure vase-painting of the use of structure to convey meaning, and such complexity is unusual in vase-painting; in the general narrative tradition of black-figure painting, represented by the works of less gifted narrative painters, the tendency for scenes to be enclosed within symmetrical or balanced pairs of framing figures persists throughout the sixth century as the dominant compositional structure.

For the study of the Attic painting tradition as it came to be established into the second half of the sixth century, the Athenian black-figure workshop known as Group E provides what is in many ways an almost ideal corpus of vases, for it comprises some 150 vases (most of which are Type B amphorae), decorated with a fairly limited repertoire of mythological scenes. For the present study, the figure arrangements occurring in seven scene types[21] were analysed, and the results are summarised in the table on the facing page. The essential distinction is between enclosed and unenclosed scenes, where enclosed scenes are

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[19] Stanley (1993), for instance, regards it as evidence of composition in a literary context.

[20] In verbal art one might compare with the Homeric description of the shield of Achilleus the much more simply structured *Shield of Herakles* attributed to Hesiod.

[21] Scene types with fewer than five extant versions are omitted as being statistically insignificant, although among these too there is a high incidence of symmetry about a central focus. The fourteen versions of Herakles fighting Geryoneus are not included in this analysis: Herakles and the triple-bodied giant occupy the full width of the picture-field, leaving no room for bystanders. Chariot scenes also constitute a special case: in scenes where the chariot is seen from the side (the most common arrangement: thirty-two of the fifty-nine chariot scenes examined) or in the process of turning (fourteen scenes), there is no real centre-piece as the equipage tends to occupy most of the picture field; there is additionally a strong sense of directional movement in such scenes. A further thirteen Group E scenes involve a frontal chariot (e.g. plate 3), where a natural symmetry derives from the customary arrangement of the inner pair of horses' heads turned inwards, and the outer pair turned outwards, but of these only one is further enclosed by human figures. This study draws on Deirdre Harrison's analysis of figure arrangements of Group E scenes: Harrison (1996).

SCENE TYPE	TOTAL SCENES	% OF TOTAL ENCLOSED	ENCLOSED		UNENCLOSED
			Symmetrical	Palinopt	
Herakles & Lion	29	93 %	26	1	2
Dionysian	25	96 %	13	11	1
Theseus & Minotaur[1]	23	100 %	22	1	0
Birth of Athene	10	90 %	9	0	1
Departure of Warrior(s)	12	75 %	5	4	3
Fight	9	78 %	7	0	2
Recovery of Helen	8	64 %	2	3	3
TOTALS	116	90 %	84	20	12

[1] While most of these scenes are balanced around Theseus and the Minotaur, four are balanced around the Minotaur alone, with Theseus included in the number of framing figures.

those involving a central figure or action framed between balanced pairs of normally inward-facing bystanders; enclosed scenes are further subdivided into those that are symmetrical,[22] and those that are numerically balanced but involve a palinopt figure on the outer edge.[23]

In these scene types, as in the majority of mythological narratives in black-figure, there is a central focus on one or two figures who are actively engaged: Herakles and the Lion, Theseus and the Minotaur, Zeus and Athene, one or more departing warriors, and Helen and Menelaos; in Dionysian scenes, the centre may be occupied by Dionysos himself, or Dionysos and a woman (Ariadne?), or, unusually, just the woman. In each type, these central figures are commonly bracketed by other figures who are typically immobile, or making some small, although not necessarily insignificant, gesture. Because they are normally inward-facing, as though observing the action, they may be termed bystanders, although they are usually appropriate to the subject, or at least not inappropriate: Herakles supported specifically by Athene and Iolaos[24] is highly appropriate, while Herakles supported by a woman and a man who may be interpreted as Athene and Iolaos is not inappropriate. It is surely not coincidental that while generally only these two figures enclose Herakles and the Lion, Theseus with the Minotaur regularly has *more* than one enclosing pair, presumably to be read as representing the Athenian youths and maidens since they usually comprise young men and women in equal numbers. Bystanders are not necessarily minor characters, as is indicated by Athene in a supporting role when Herakles fights the lion.

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22 That is, in the sense that the central 'action' is framed by an equal *number* of figures on either side in more or less of mirror image (normally facing inwards); however their gender and gestures are not necessarily the same.

23 A palinopt figure is one that walks in one direction but looks back over his or her shoulder (like Hermes and possibly Antenor in the Troilos band on the François Vase). Such figures are sometimes positioned at the margin of a scene (almost invariably the right), and although numerically they may balance another entirely inward-facing figure on the opposite margin, the *enclosing* symmetry is fractured. Nevertheless such scenes are listed as a sub-category of 'enclosed' as is appropriate to the general impression. For discussion of the particular signification of the palinopt figure in the corpus of the Painter of the Vatican Mourner, see below.

24 The clearest identification is on the neck-amphora of Exekias (Berlin 1720: *ABV* 143.1, 686; *Para.* 59; *Add.*^{2} 39), where along with a named Iolaos there is a named Athene equipped with helmet, spear and shield; but compare also the vases of Group E and associates where the otherwise unmarked woman wears a helmet (Vatican 348: *ABV* 134.16), or bears a shield (Berlin 1717: *ABV* 141.7, 686; *Add.*^{2} 38; and Louvre C 12261: *ABV* 142.9; *Para.* 58; *Add.*^{2} 38).

With few exceptions, the scenes on the vases of Group E and associates are typical of their tradition; there is little of the structural complexity observed above on the François Vase. In Group E the symmetrical patterns seem to be merely a standard structuring device, a natural way of composing a scene as a unity. From examination of all the scenes it becomes clear that the vase-painters, like the early Greek oral poets, thought in terms of a basic theme-unit (here the unit is the essential mythological subject: Herakles-and-Lion, Theseus-and-Minotaur, Dionysos and so on) that could then be more or less elaborated by being enclosed within more or fewer pairs of figures, depending on the subject and the available space to either side of the central figure or action. It seems possible that the painters may sometimes have been sensitive to refinements in annular structuring, for particularly in scenes of Theseus and the Minotaur where there are regularly two pairs of bystanders, the numerical symmetry of two inward-facing figures to either side of the central group may be further analysed in terms of gender (and gender-differentiation was clear at a glance in Athenian black-figure painting because women's flesh was painted white: this added colour is often now lost, wholly or in part); the most common pattern is A-B-C-B-A (youth + woman + Theseus-and-Minotaur + woman + youth) as is exemplified by plate 1,[25] twice elaborated as AA-B-C-B-AA (where AA represents two overlapping youths). However 'chain' patterns of A-B-C-A-B also occur, as in plate 2;[26] it need hardly be stated that structures of this last type also abound in the Homeric poems.

In most scenes from the Group E workshop, the enclosing bystanders do not have iconographic attributes (if this was part of the established tradition, it would account for why in Herakles and the Lion scenes the woman is often unmarked or merely given a spear as identification), and their gestures and stance tend to be fairly standardised: indeed this often adds to the visual impression of enclosing symmetry. The framing figures in plates 1 and 2 well illustrate this: the youths on the London amphora [plate 1] hold their hands low, in mirror image, and the women's near-side hands are in a similar position while their further hands gesture at a higher level, filling spaces around Theseus. On the obverse of the New York amphora [plate 2], the outer youth and woman adopt a

25 London 1842.3-14.3 (B 205): *ABV* 136.55; *Add.*^{2} 37.

26 New York 56.171.12: *ABV* 134.22; *Para.* 55: the simple symmetry of the frontal chariot on the reverse [plate 3] is in strong contrast to the more complex obverse.

mirror image stance, the inner woman on the left has the same standardised form and gesture as the women on the London amphora, and the inner youth on the right differs only in that one hand is raised higher in a more obvious gesture—but then there is more space before Theseus' face. These standard male and female figure-forms recur on most vases from this workshop—and indeed throughout the established black-figure tradition.

In these scenes and the multitude like them, where there is little or no attempt to depart from traditional compositional or ornamental presentation, the symmetrical enclosing figure arrangements do not seem intended to serve an analytical function as they did on the François Vase. The scenes are not complex, there is little strong directionality, and no evidence of any attempt to convey passage of time. The figure patterns rather seem to represent the natural way of building up a scene within the tradition, just as was observed on the early black-figure examples, in that the enclosing figures provide a framing context that contributes to rather than detracting from the narrative focus; the effect is to turn a bald statement into more of a constructed story.

The normative force of any established tradition is very strong. Innovation is always against the grain, and is therefore rare. Where development does occur in a traditional context, it generally takes the form of adaptation of existing elements to serve new purposes, and it is generally unobtrusive. One of the later painters within the ambience of Group E, the Painter of the Vatican Mourner, seems to have recognised the potential for conveying additional meaning through breaking with the traditional pattern under specific and repeated circumstances. The semiotic effect of his small variation is entirely dependent on his viewers' tradition-based expectation that certain scene-types will be symmetrically enclosed: their attention is caught by the painter's departure from normal practice, and they are thereby led to consider the significance of the innovation. Within his small extant corpus, this painter developed a novel significatory use for the palinopt marginal figure that had appeared sporadically as a variation of the standard bystander in scenes by other painters in the workshop; in his œuvre it provides a link between the scenes on obverse and reverse of the amphorae on which it occurs.[27] Consistently positioned on the extreme right of a scene and in the pro-

[27] This phenomenon and its significance was observed by Samantha Masters in her study of the painter's extant œuvre: Masters (1996: *passim* and especially Ch. 3).

cess of walking out of it, the palinopt figure's glance back over his shoulder firmly connects him to the action of that scene, although to all appearances he is leaving it. The implied question is what his destination may be: by walking out of the scene, does the palinopt figure denote a kind of ellipsis? Does he point to future time, to subsequent events in the narrative depicted?[28]

In the case of three amphorae in this painter's corpus and one amphora very near to him,[29] the sequel seems to be offered on the other side of the vase. The palinopt figure becomes a signal to the viewer—a 'hinge' or run-on figure—introducing a kind of visual enjambement that leads one's eye and attention out of one narrative episode and into the next, which happens to be depicted on the other side of the amphora. Such a theory demands that each amphora by this painter be looked at as a synthesised whole. The recognition of such a structural link between obverse and reverse scenes would point to the possibility of specific interpretation of scenes that were previously regarded as anonymous scene-types such as the 'departing warrior' and the 'wedding chariot': full comprehension of the vase emerges only from contemplation of both obverse and reverse scenes in relation.

A brief consideration of the scenes and the way they are paired will illustrate the point. Consistently, of the two scenes on each amphora, one is recognisable as referring to a specific mythological narrative, while the other has hitherto resisted firm identification. On the Christchurch amphora[30] [plates 4-5], for instance, the reverse bears an unusual rendition of an early favourite in the black-figure tradition: Herakles, Deianeira and Nettos. Herakles, standing on the left and unmistakable with lionskin and club, reaches out to take the arm of a woman who faces him, coyly drawing her himation away from her face (the composition type is similar to that of Menelaos' recovery of Helen); to the right is a centaur in hostile pose,[31] having armed himself with stones in

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28 As indeed, some forty years earlier, does the palinopt Hermes (and probably Antenor) in the Troilos scene on the François Vase.

29 These are Vatican 16589 (formerly 350): *ABV* 140.1, 686; *Para.* 58; *Add.*^{2} 38; Boston 1970.8: *ABV* 140.2; *Add.*^{2} 38; and Christchurch 43/57: *Para.* 58 (140.2 *bis*) *Add.*^{2} 38; close to his style is Los Angeles M77.48.1 (formerly Basel Market): *Para.* 58; *Add.*^{2} 38.

30 N. 29 above.

31 The fact that he is palinopt, moving right but facing left, is not significant: palinopt figure *within* a scene are used occasionally in the black-figure tradition as a variation, but their use on the margin of a scene is rare.

anticipation of Herakles' impending revenge attack, while on the right margin is a fully-draped male bystander facing inwards: he balances Herakles and so encloses the scene in accordance with convention. On the obverse is a wedding procession with a man driving a chariot team, his wife beside him drawing her himation away from her face as is customary in this scene-type (the gesture is similar to that of Deianeira on the reverse); two women walk alongside steadying gifts on their heads; at the right margin is a figure resembling Hermes in garb (short chlamys and petasos), but otherwise anonymous like the other figures; he is the palinopt figure, walking to right out of the scene but looking back over his shoulder at the small procession. According to the palinopt theory, the wedding would be that of Herakles and Deianeira, which will lead to Herakles' having to rescue his bride from Nettos' assault, an interpretation that is by no means at odds with the mythological accounts.[32] It may also be a consideration that according to the myth this episode will eventually contribute directly to Herakles' own death, and so is of immense evocative significance.

The amphora in Boston [plates 6-7][33] has on the obverse Achilleus' ambush of Troilos at the fountain-house: Achilleus lurks behind the fountain under a plane tree; Polyxena has already placed a large vessel under the water-spout, and faces right towards Troilos who rides up on one horse, leading another, a dog in attendance; a bird (Apollo's raven?) flies overhead perhaps as an omen of the coming disaster; the right margin of the scene is enclosed by a draped male bystander figure (balancing Achilleus). On the reverse a scene identified by Beazley (*ABV* 140.2) as a "warrior setting out, with his squire mounted and leading his master's void horse" has no intrinsic mythological reference. On the left is a draped male bystander facing inwards; then the warrior, with shield, spear and helmet, walks to right; next are two horses walking in step, the nearside one ridden by a youth. At the right edge of the scene is a palinopt figure, again a draped male bystander, looking back at the little procession as he walks out of the scene. A linkage between these two scenes would lead one to suppose that the youth in the central foreground of the scene on the reverse would be Troilos, and that the two

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[32] Sophokles, *Trach.* 564-68, Apollodoros, *Bibl.* 2 [152] 7, 6; Diodorus Siculus 4, 36,3-5; Hyginus *Fab.* 34. For a more detailed mythological interpretation of this amphora, see Masters (1996: 101-17).

[33] N. 29 above.

horses are both his: he is setting out to take them to water. The armed man is then perhaps his anxious brother Hektor who in due course will have the sad task of recovering his body (compare the right end of the ambush scene on the François Vase). The palinopt bystander seems to be leading the boy into the next scene, and is thus perhaps to be identified as the draped bystander in the ambush scene—he may be a *paidagogos*.[34] Once again, like Herakles' encounter with Nettos, the ambush of Troilos was probably perceived as having significance beyond its own context, relating to the subsequent deaths of Achilleus and Polyxena.[35]

The Painter's name vase in the Vatican collections [plates 8-9][36] has generated controversy over the identity of the mourning woman on the obverse,[37] but for each of the suggested interpretations the detail is inconclusive: Eos (mourning over Memnon[38]) normally has wings; Paris (mourned by Oinone[39]) is difficult to identify in the absence of a bow or quiver, and for Sarpedon (mourned by Europa[40]) the prominent presence of armour is a problem since that hero was despoiled of his panoply on the battlefield.[41] A new interpretation is suggested by the palinopt figure on the scene on the reverse, which represents Menelaos' recovery of Helen in fairly standard formula: a warrior with drawn sword grasps the mantle of a woman who seductively holds her himation away from her face. At the left, facing inwards, is a draped male bystander; at the right a palinopt warrior in helmet and shield strides out of the scene, looking back over his shoulder at the central action. The painter seems to have taken care to differentiate the two armed figures: Menelaos has a high crested helmet, wears a tunic and holds a sword but no shield, while the warrior on the right wears a low-crested helmet, no tunic at all, and he holds a shield but no weapon; the fact that he is leaving the scene and his apparent eagerness to do so (his stride is wide) as well as this differentiation might signify that he is not intended to represent just another

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34 For a fuller discussion see Masters (1996: 38-53).

35 The potential for tragic interpretation of Troilos scenes in black-figure is discussed in Mackay (1996b).

36 N. 29 above.

37 For discussion of the main interpretations and for more detailed analysis of the two scenes and their interconnection, see Masters (1996: 61-83).

38 Beazley, *ABV* 140.1.

39 Zahn (1983: 591).

40 Suggested by Erika Simon, pers. comm.

41 Homer, *Il.* 16.663-65.

Greek, but rather a Trojan warrior. A likely identification for this figure is Deiphobos, who married Helen after the death of Paris[42] and who was killed by Menelaos once the latter had regained his wife:[43] such an identification would account for the figure's haste in leaving the scene, for not only is he a Trojan warrior but he is the current husband of the woman who is the source of all the hostility between the Greeks and the Trojans.

If the palinopt figure may be taken in this painter's work to imply a conscious connection between the two scenes on the vase, the range of possible identities for the woman and the corpse on the obverse is substantially reduced, for there should be a connection with at least one of the identifiable figures on the reverse in the recovery scene. The most visually dominant figure in both scenes is the woman, centrally placed, and with white flesh and decorated drapery to draw attention. It is a reasonable assumption that she is the same person in both scenes: Helen, who could mourn over any one of her three husbands. Paris (for whom in any case one would look for an iconographic bow or quiver) can be eliminated, as he was dead long before Troy was taken, and the palinopt figure leads from the recovery into the mourning scene, implying a temporal progression if not a cause-and-effect relationship. Menelaos is not reported to have died of a mortal wound on a battlefield.[44] This leaves Deiphobos, who indeed died at Troy. The lost account of the recovery of Helen and the death of Deiphobos in the *Iliupersis* may have been crucial for the interpretation of this scene; in its absence the interpretation must remain speculative, but it seems likely that had Helen wished to mourn over her Trojan husband she would have had to do so secretly once taken back by the Greeks, and this would account for the extraordinary circumstance and apparently remote location of the scene. Although this scene does not seem to have obvious extra-contextual significance for the subsequent story of Helen in parallel to the Christchurch and Boston scenes, a similarly evocative effect may be perceived in that it invites consideration of the dire effects of Helen's marital relationships both on her various husbands and more broadly on the Greek and Trojan nations.

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42 As was recounted in the *Little Iliad*: Proclus, *Chrest.* 2.

43 *Iliou persis*: Proclus, *Chrest.* 2.

44 The Menelaion excavated at Therapne (Sparta) as a shrine of Menelaos and Helen supports this.

Finally an unattributed amphora closely connected with the corpus of the Painter of the Vatican Mourner also exemplifies a palinopt link between the scenes: the amphora now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.[45] Here a wedding chariot procession on one side with a palinopt figure on the right edge of the scene can be related to the recovery of Helen on the other side.[46] In this as in all the other instances, the interpretative effect of the palinopt figure is entirely dependent on its being a marked, and thus significant, departure from the established tradition in the scene-type.

Although the number of vases in the corpus of the Painter of the Vatican Mourner on which this palinopt phenomenon may be observed is small, further observations militate against its being dismissed as mere coincidence: first, it is significant that on all three amphorae in the corpus[47] the pairing of scenes occurs in the combination of one enclosed and one non-enclosed, and the palinopt figure is situated consistently so as to lead from past to future events; furthermore on the three vases where there is only one major scene (two hydriae and a lekythos[48]) and thus nothing with which it could be thematically linked, the scenes are all unambiguously enclosed.[49] This reading of the amphorae depends on an awareness of the underlying tradition; only when one recognises how unusual it is for these scenes to include a palinopt figure at the right margin[50] is it possible to estimate how such a figure must have caught the viewer's attention and directed it onward to the next scene. It is curious that this potential for linking scenes was not developed further by

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[45] Los Angeles 77.48.1: *Para.* 58 (where it is listed as Basel Market). Beazley compared this amphora with the Christchurch amphora (n. 29 above).

[46] Two other amphorae attributed to the Towry Whyte Painter (who, like the Painter of the Vatican Mourner, is within the Group E ambience) exhibit a similar pairing *via* a palinopt figure of a wedding chariot scene with a recovery of Helen: Orvieto 315: *ABV* 142.2; and the neck-amphora Vatican 358: *ABV* 142.7; *Para.* 58.

[47] A fourth amphora has been attributed to this painter by D. von Bothmer (Malibu 78.AE.148: Mackay [1984, figs. 1a and b]), but the attribution is not without problems: Masters (1996: 153-76). Although one scene includes a palinopt Hermes on the right margin, there seems to be no thematic connection between obverse and reverse.

[48] Hydriae: Orvieto, Faina inv. 2674 (formerly 69): *ABV* 140.4; *Add.*^{2} 38; and New York, Centre Island, private (recently attributed by D. von Bothmer); lekythos: Syracuse 8156: *ABV* 140.6.

[49] The two remaining vases in the corpus both have continuous scenes set in a ring: a lekanis lid (Würzburg 442: *ABV* 140.5), and a dinos with scenes in a ring on the mouth (Vienna 3619: *ABV* 140.3, *Add.*^{2} 38).

[50] For instance, of the fifty-nine chariot scenes examined within the Group E workshop, only eight have a palinopt in this position, and of these eight, five can be interpreted in relationship with the scene on the other side of the amphora.

other black-figure painters, especially those in the same workshop. A few examples[51] emerge from among the vases attributed as Manner of the Lysippides Painter (which is the later continuation of the Group E workshop), but a palinopt figure on the margin of the scene remains rare, and the traditional scene-format with focal centre enclosed between one or more pairs of bystanders continues to prevail.[52]

Although the Painter of the Vatican Mourner was by no means a slavish traditionalist in his scene-composition, his innovative ability pales into insignificance in comparison with the inventive ingenuity of the black-figure master Exekias. Emerging also from the traditional ambience of the Group E workshop, this potter and painter in an apparently quite short productive life adapts and develops aspects of the tradition within which he works in virtually every vase attributed to him, yet for the most part[53] he continues to compose his scenes according to traditional principles of inward-turned enclosure: he either uses the conventional bystanders, or, on later vases where onlookers tend to be eliminated, he creates with his central figures an inward-turned balance that gives an essentially similar impression that the scene is enclosed, not open-ended.

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[51] For instance on the obverse of the Type A amphora attributed to the Mastos Painter (Würzburg 267: *ABV* 258.10; *Para.* 116; *Add.*^{2} 67), is the chariot of Ariadne (or she may be Semele), surrounded by diminutive satyrs and accompanied by Hermes; on the right margin Dionysos looks back at the procession while leading the way round to the next scene where he reappears in the middle accompanied by two full-size satyrs, Hermes and a woman. Similarly on a neck-amphora (Cambridge GR 27.1864, formerly 48: *ABV* 259.17; *Add.*^{2} 67) a palinopt satyr leads four carousing companions to the other side of the vase where Dionysos and a woman recline at a symposion amid smaller-scale satyrs and maenads.

[52] Only among the red-figure scenes of the Pioneers does one again occasionally find palinopt figures signalling the continuation of scenes from obverse to reverse—as for instance on Euthymides' amphora Munich 2309: *ARV*^{2} 27.4, 1620; *Para.* 323; *Add.*^{2} 156 where Theseus carries off Korone (*sic*) on the obverse with Helen remonstrating: on the left margin of the scene Peirithoos strides to right looking out of the scene over his shoulder, doubtless at the two further women on the reverse who run daintily after him to right.

[53] Notable exceptions are his scenes with a dominant leftward directionality, all of which represent some calamity: Aias carrying off the body of Achilleus on both sides of the neck-amphora Munich 1470: *ABV* 144.6; *Add.*^{2} 39, with which can be compared the lost Berlin neck-amphora 1718: *ABV* 144.5, where however on the left a women gesticulating to right closes the scene; the chariot accident on the Type B amphora in the Roš collection in Zürich: *ABV* 147.4; *Para.* 61; *Add.*^{2} 41 (attributed to Exekias by Bloesch [1975]), with which compare the scene on the Type A amphora Louvre F 206: *ABV* 145.12; *Para.* 60, where one of a pair of horses being ridden to left is falling, although there are figures at the left of the scene; and Philadelphia 3442: *ABV* 145.14; *Para.* 60; *Add.*^{2} 40.

The scenes on his earliest vases are the most conventional in their framing, with the central, more active figures enclosed within one, two or even three inward-facing pairs of figures. On his neck-amphora in Boston,[54] for instance [plates 10-11], where he creatively spreads the harnessing of a chariot over obverse and reverse, the scene on the reverse maintains a careful symmetry even though it has an unusual compositional arrangement: at the left margin stands an inward-facing, nude man, his further hand raised as though adjusting the nose-band on a horse that, although frontally presented, turns its head to the left towards him; at the right margin stands an inward-facing draped man, his further hand raised as though to pat the nose of the horse that walks to right towards him (though in profile view, its head balances that of the frontal horse on the left). These two figure-combinations, in stance almost mirror-images, enclose a woman to right and the hoplite who is leading the second horse. The obverse scene, where the other two horses are already being harnessed, is framed between a pair of inward-facing women, within which the draped man holding the reins to the left of the chariot balances the nude groom adjusting the bridle of the horse nearer the right edge of the scene.

In Exekias' middle period, although he produces three very crowded chariot scenes with many overlapping figures (enclosed by three and in one case four pairs of inward-facing figures[55]) his main developmental thrust is towards more sparsely populated scenes[56] with little overlapping and indeed with a tendency to omit enclosing bystanders entirely unless directly involved in the action of the scene.[57] On the vases of his late period this focal clarity becomes standard: technically speaking there are no bystanders, for all figures are fully integrated into the context. The late works show an interest in the potential for conveying an impression of depth of field, even despite the restrictive parameters of the black-figure technique and tradition, through intricate overlapping and annular arrangement of figures.

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54 Boston 89.273: *ABV* 144.4; *Para.* 59; *Add.*^{2} 39.

55 On two amphorae in the Faina collection in Orvieto: 2747 (formerly 77): *ABV* 144.10; *Para.* 60; and 2745 (formerly 187): *ABV* 145.11, 686; *Para.* 60; *Add.*^{2} 40.

56 For example the neck-amphorae Berlin 1720: *ABV* 143.1, 686; *Para.* 59; *Add.*^{2} 39; and London 1849.5-18.10 (formerly B 209): *ABV* 144.8, 686; *Para.* 60; *Add.*^{2} 39.

57 For example the obverse of the Type B amphora Boulogne 558: *ABV* 145.18; *Para.* 60; *Add.*^{2} 40, where Aias prepares to commit suicide in solitary seclusion, 'enclosed' only by a drooping palm tree on the left and his piled armour on the right—the helmet stares inwards towards him with its empty eyes.

Nowhere is this better demonstrated than on the reverse of the Vatican amphora [plate 12]:[58] the scene at first glance conforms with the traditional composition, whereby the central focus (in this instance it would be Kastor and his horse) is enclosed by paired figures: on the left Polydeukes, balanced by Tyndareos on the right, within which are Leda on the left balanced by the small boy on the right, whose lack of mass is built up visually by the horse's head extending above his head. However the scene is far more complex in its interactions, which in turn accentuate the different planes within the picture: the horse is the strongest focus, because of its mass of black; Kastor is on the further side of the horse, in the furthest plane, therefore, along with Leda who offers him a flower with her near hand, implying that she is, if anything, yet further back in the field. Interacting with the horse is Tyndareos on the right margin of the scene: he strokes the horse's nose with his further hand, implying that he is if anything a little further to the fore than the horse's plane. Yet superimposed over his near hand is the stool and folded robe carried by the small boy—and the boy steadies the stool-leg with his further hand: he is thus on the front plane of the picture. He is carrying his burden over to Polydeukes on the left (as a boxer Polydeukes would be the obvious recipient for the athlete's perquisites of oil-filled aryballos and fresh robe), a destination subtly emphasised by Exekias' placing Polydeukes too on the frontal plane of the scene: the dog (originally white and thus eye-catching) has its paws wrapped playfully around Polydeukes' further leg, and the dog is in turn superimposed over Leda's skirt; Polydeukes is by this firmly located in the frontal plane, like the boy.

What at first sight, then, might appear to be an example of the standard enclosing arrangement of figures is in fact a far more subtle and intricate pattern: not the traditional A-B-C-B-A, therefore, as it seems at first glance, but:

58 Vatican 344: *ABV* 145.13,686; *Para.* 60; *Add.*^{2} 40. For a more detailed analysis of the depth of field effect on this amphora, see Mackay (1979). Other late vases with comparable awareness of depth are the amphora in the Roš Collection in Zürich: *ABV* 147.4; *Para.* 61; *Add.*^{2} 41; the Type A amphora Philadelphia 3442: *ABV* 145.14; *Para.* 60; *Add.*^{2} 40; some of the fragmentary funerary plaques in Berlin, especially that with the seated women: Berlin F 1813: *ABV* 146.22, 687; *Para.* 60; *Add.*^{2} 41; and the fragmentary 'copy' of the Vatican amphora, Leipzig T 355 a-c, T 391 and Cambridge 114: *ABV* 145.15 / 18 *bis*, 714; *Para.* 60; *Add.*^{2} 40.

B1............B2 C1....................C2 A1.........................A2	Leda........Kastor Horse....Tyndareos Polydeukes...............Boy

On other, earlier vases Exekias manipulates the traditional enclosed structure in other ways that produce effects appropriate to his subjects. For instance in the unique scene in the tondo of his eye-cup [plate 13],[59] where Dionysos sails his boat from right to left in a circular field, an enclosed effect derives first from the seven dolphins positioned around the boat: the four more-or-less in line beneath the boat form two pairs, each facing inwards; the boat is further framed at the level of the sail by a further pair of dolphins nose-down and belly-outwards, as though following those below (this additionally creates a suggestion of swirling movement around the scene); at the bottom, near the median line established by the mast, the seventh dolphin moves from right to left, echoing and underlining the movement and direction of the boat. Above the sail from a vine growing up the mast hang seven large bunches of grapes, their mass variously positioned so as to balance the seven dolphins below, further enclosing the boat. Thus in a field of a shape that does not lend itself to a linear structure, the principle of enclosure has been adapted so that the central element of the hull, sail and sailor is framed by a circular arrangement that yet retains the notion of balance and (to a lesser extent) inward-turned enclosure.

Exekias too was seemingly challenged by a desire to represent the passage of time, most notably on the Type A amphora in Philadelphia,[60] where in and between the two scenes [plates 14-15] he seems to have attempted to evoke a substantial portion of the events recounted in the *Aithiopis*, starting with the death of Antilochos (killed by Memnon) on one side and pursuing the story around to the other where Menelaos fights off an Aithiopian (evoking the now-dead Memnon) in the left half of the scene while in the right half Aias is lifting Achilleus' corpse.[61] The arrangement in the two scenes enhances the interpretation: in the first, the scene is unenclosed and directional to the left, an arrangement

59 Munich 2044: *ABV* 146.21, 686; *Para.* 60; *Add.*^{2} 41.
60 Philadelphia 3442: *ABV* 145.14; *Para.* 60; *Add.*^{2} 40.
61 This observation is discussed in more detail by Schefold (1978: 243-44).

suggestive of disaster,[62] while the second is divided into two halves, each referring to a slightly different stage of the story; this is emphasised by the unusual out-turned arrangement of the two central figures, yet it is noteworthy that a general sense of balance is retained in the scene as a whole.

Analysis of the figure arrangement in Exekias' works indicates that the exceptionally creative and innovative painter, in this as in so many other ways, essentially worked within the tradition, adapting and extending it to meet the demands of his narrative impulse, but not confronting its constraints, and so not risking rejection of his approach by patrons steeped in the tradition and so resistant to change. It is precisely in his figure arrangements that his respect for traditional form is most perceptible, for this is the aspect of a scene that governs the first impression and thus a viewer's initial response of interest or rejection.

This overview of the patterns of figure arrangement in the Athenian black-figure tradition has shown that the painters, whether gifted visual narrators like Kleitias and Exekias or of indifferent ability like the members of Group E and many others, adhere in the main to the principle of symmetrical or balanced enclosure as a fundamental way of composing a scene in a mythological narrative or of subdividing a long visual continuum (in the case of animal bands). While lesser painters use the patterns without much evidence of thought, as part of the traditional formulation of a given scene-type, some more innovative painters strive to convey additional meaning through subtle variation of the traditional forms. The best practitioners seem to have regarded the traditional pattern as a basis upon which they can further build more sophisticated patterns that entice the alert viewer into complex perceptions and interpretations. Thus enclosure, or visual ring-composition, is a fundamental structure, perhaps best regarded as a natural pattern of thinking that can be applied in many different ways to serve many different narratival functions depending on the skill and predilection of the painter, and the particular demands or interpretative potential of the subject.

Given the other narratival parallels between the oral-poetic and the black-figure traditions,[63] it seems likely that in this respect as well the visual and verbal traditions reflect a common conceptual mode, allowing the conclusion to be drawn alike for poetry and painting in early

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62 See n. 53 above.
63 See n. 3 above.

Greece that there is no one right answer to the question of what may be the function of ring-composition. In poetry as in vase-painting, annular structuring can serve to create an aesthetically unified element, to focus attention on an enclosed highlight, to link one section to another, to create an awareness of differentiated parts within a whole, and to suggest interpretative nuances. The range of potential applications within the tradition is bounded only by the limitations of the poet's or painter's own narratival genius.

From this analysis of the common structuring patterns in the black-figure vase-painting tradition, it becomes clear that symmetrical enclosure is the fundamental means of imposing structure on a group of elements so as to impose unity, define entity, and suggest interpretation. It seems to be not so much a visual strategy as a natural way of thinking (constantly reinforced, no doubt, by the visual and verbal traditions) that in the hands of the best practitioners lends itself to inventive exploitation to serve a number of different purposes. What emerges from studying the visual evidence is the recognition that symmetrical enclosure, or ring-composition, is essentially a pattern to be perceived *as a whole*, as a self-defining *entirety*: the perception of one margin of a traditional scene already predicts the arrangement of the other in more or less of mirror-image.

The suggestion to be carried over into analysis of the poetic tradition is therefore that in any compositional system, the beginning is likely to fore-ordain the end.[64] The underlying conclusion is that ring-composition or symmetrical enclosure is so fundamental a structure as to be virtually part of the substance of the traditions in which it manifests. To the audience of an oral performance, or viewers of a vase-painter's work, the opening sequence predefines the conclusion in any scene or story-section, and within the tradition the experienced eye or ear would have been attuned by the generalised repetitiousness of the pattern to register and appreciate subtle structural complexity as a significatory

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[64] This conclusion reinforces a conclusion drawn by van Otterlo (1944: 43), "daß es sich bei der Ringkomposition nicht um eine Wiederholung des Anfangs, sondern umgekehrt um eine Antizipierung des Schlusses handelt."

tool in the hands of a gifted master craftsman, whether a Kleitias, an Exekias, or a Homer.

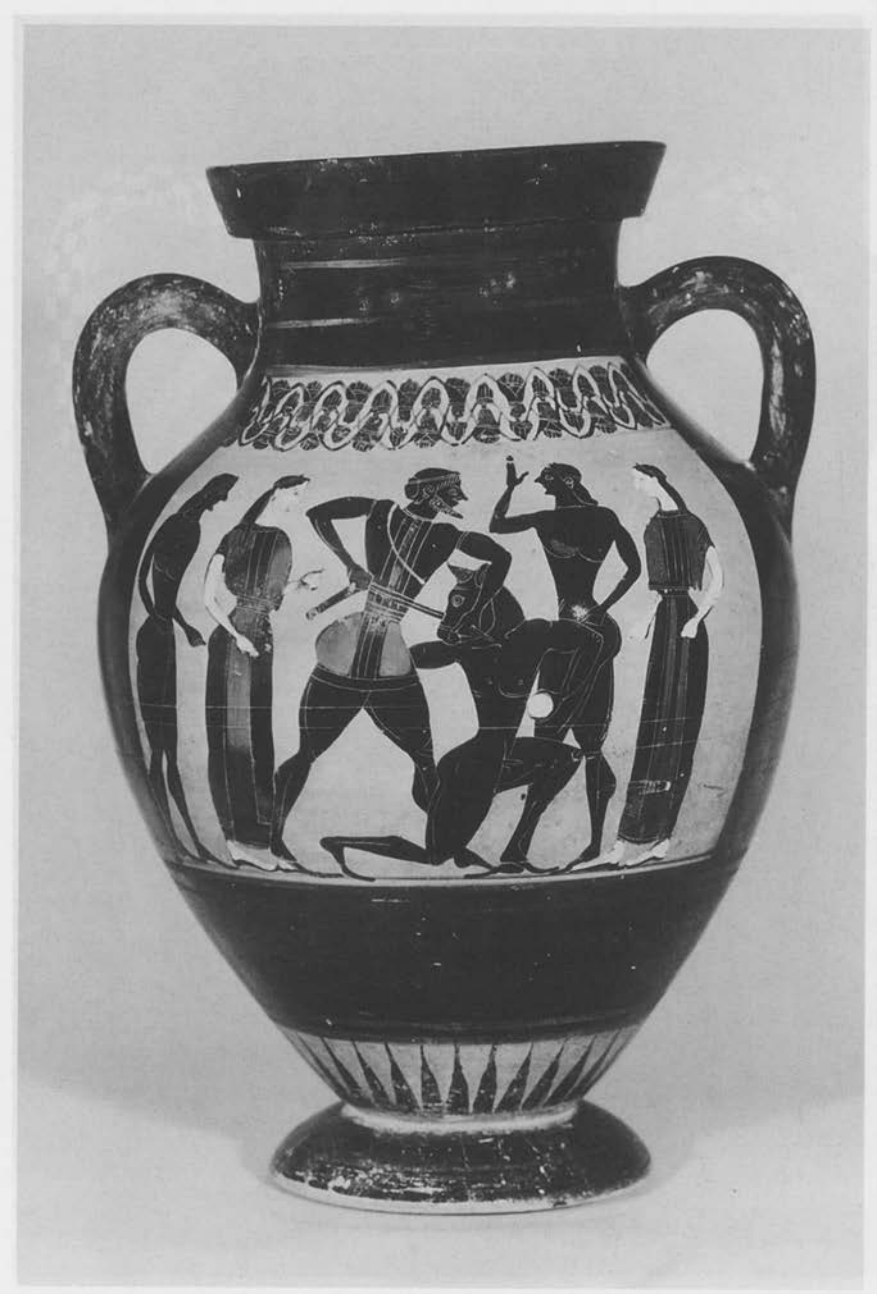

Plate 1. Theseus and the Minotaur: obverse, London, British Museum 1842.3 14.3 (B 205) Group E. Photograph courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

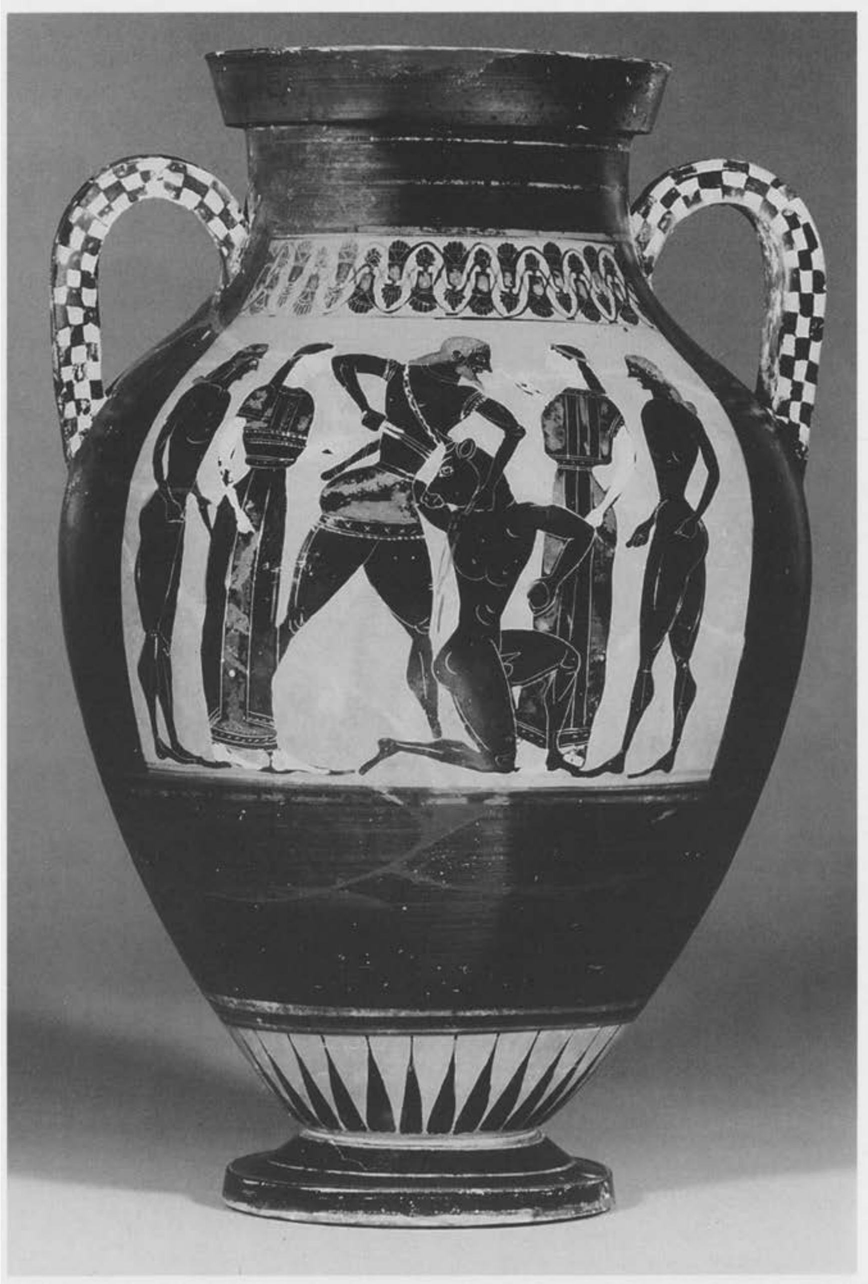

Plate 2. Theseus and the Minotaur: obverse, New York 56.171.12, Group E. Photograph courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Fletcher Fund, 1956.

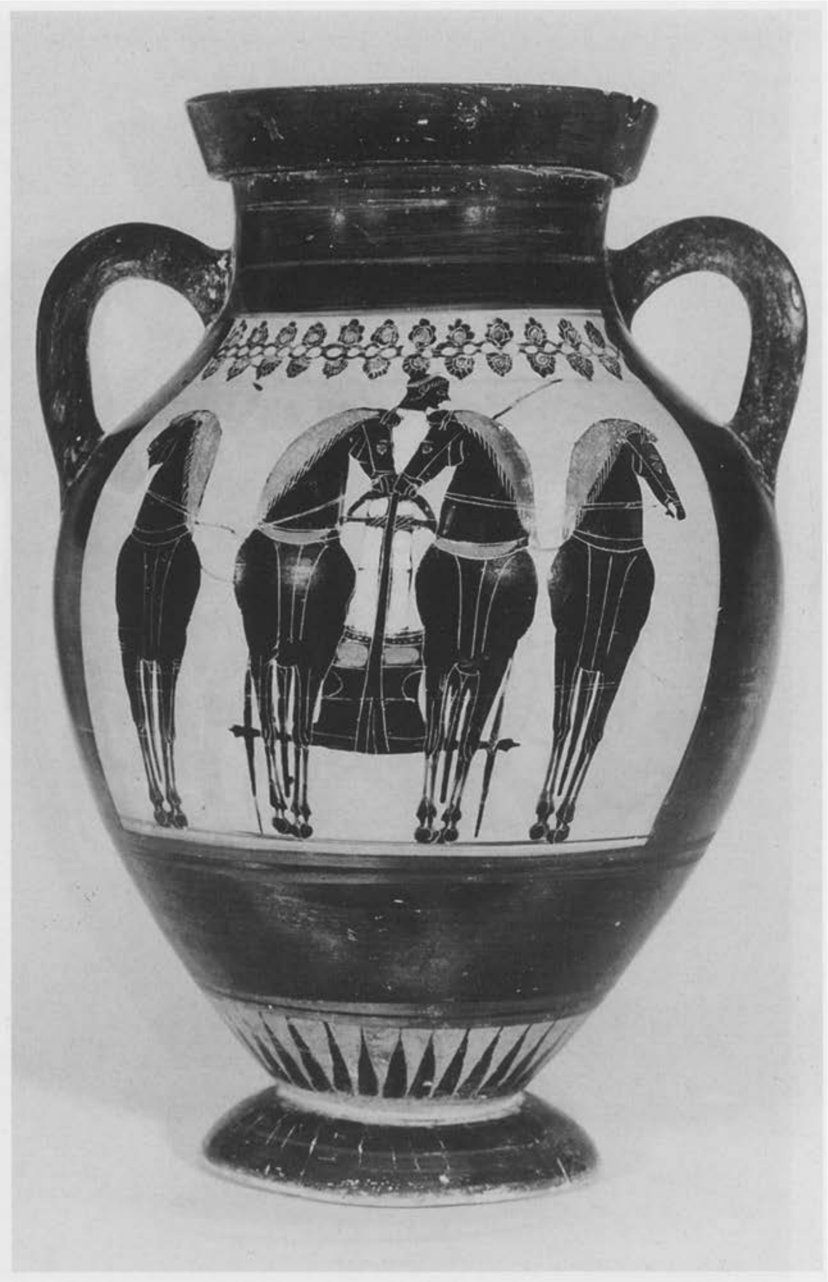

Plate 3. Frontal chariot: reverse, New York 56.171.12, Group E. Photograph courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Fletcher Fund, 1956.

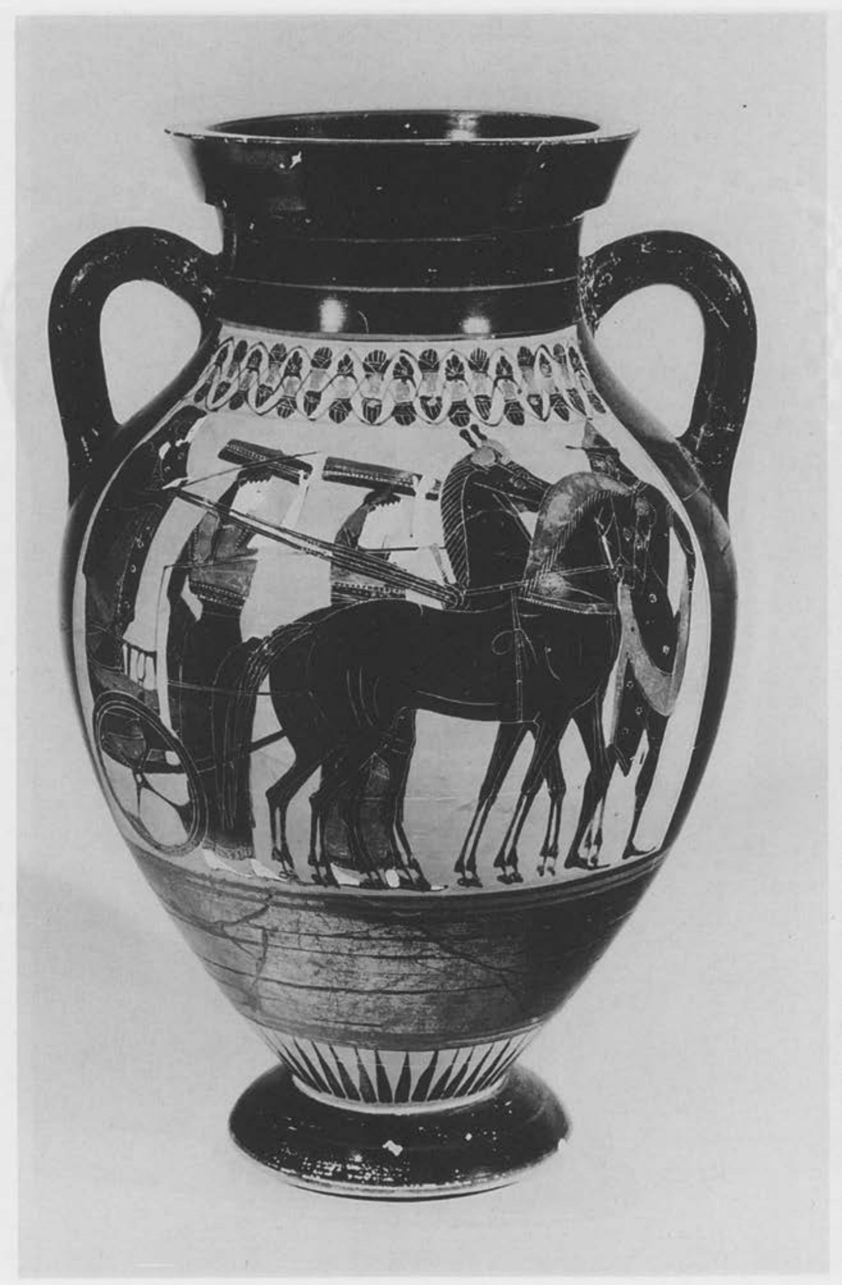

Plate 4. Wedding chariot: obverse, Christchurch 43/57, Painter of the Vatican Mourner. Photograph courtesy of the James Logie Memorial Collection, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand.

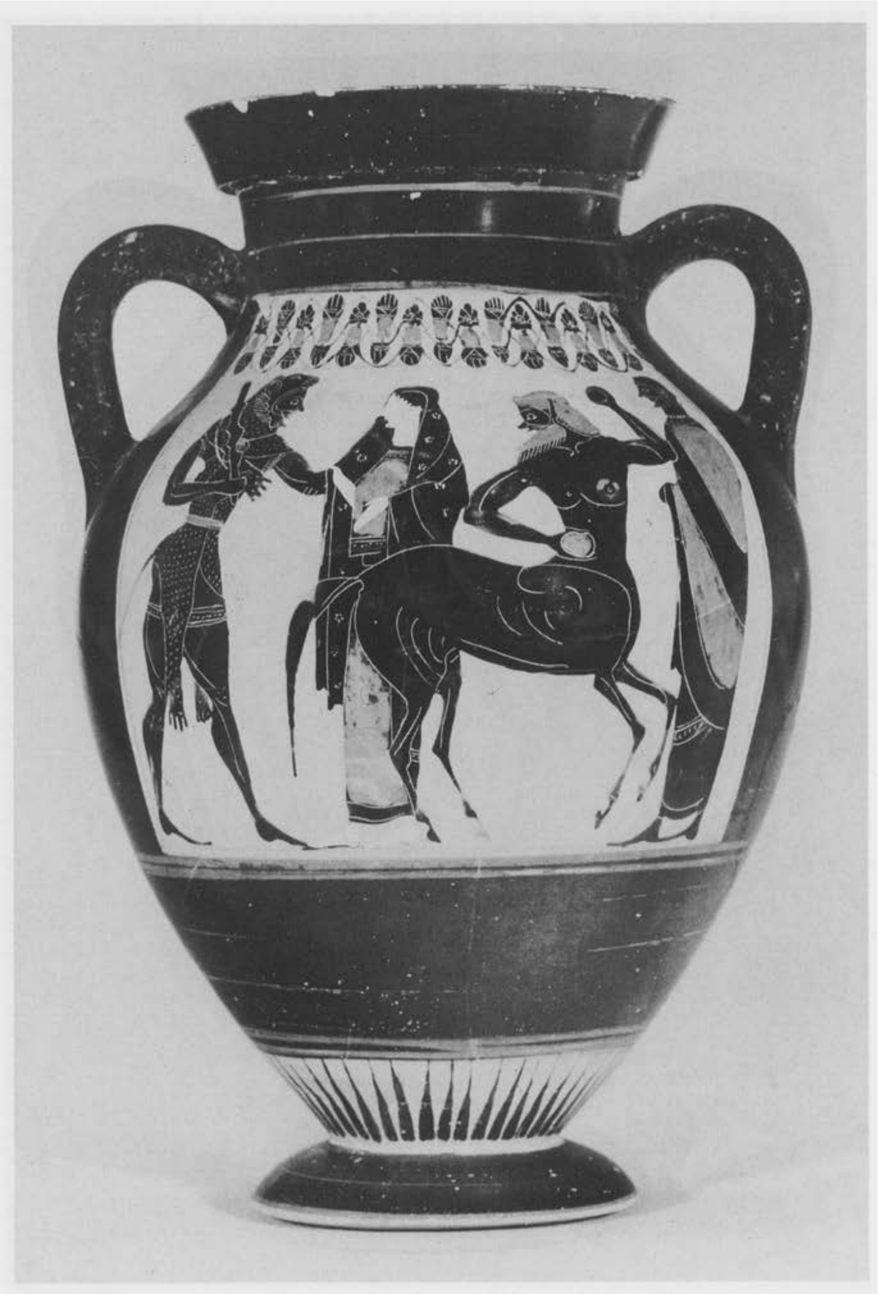

Plate 5. Herakles, Deianeira and Nettos: reverse, Christchurch 43/57, Painter of the Vatican Mourner. Photograph courtesy of the James Logie Memorial Collection, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand.

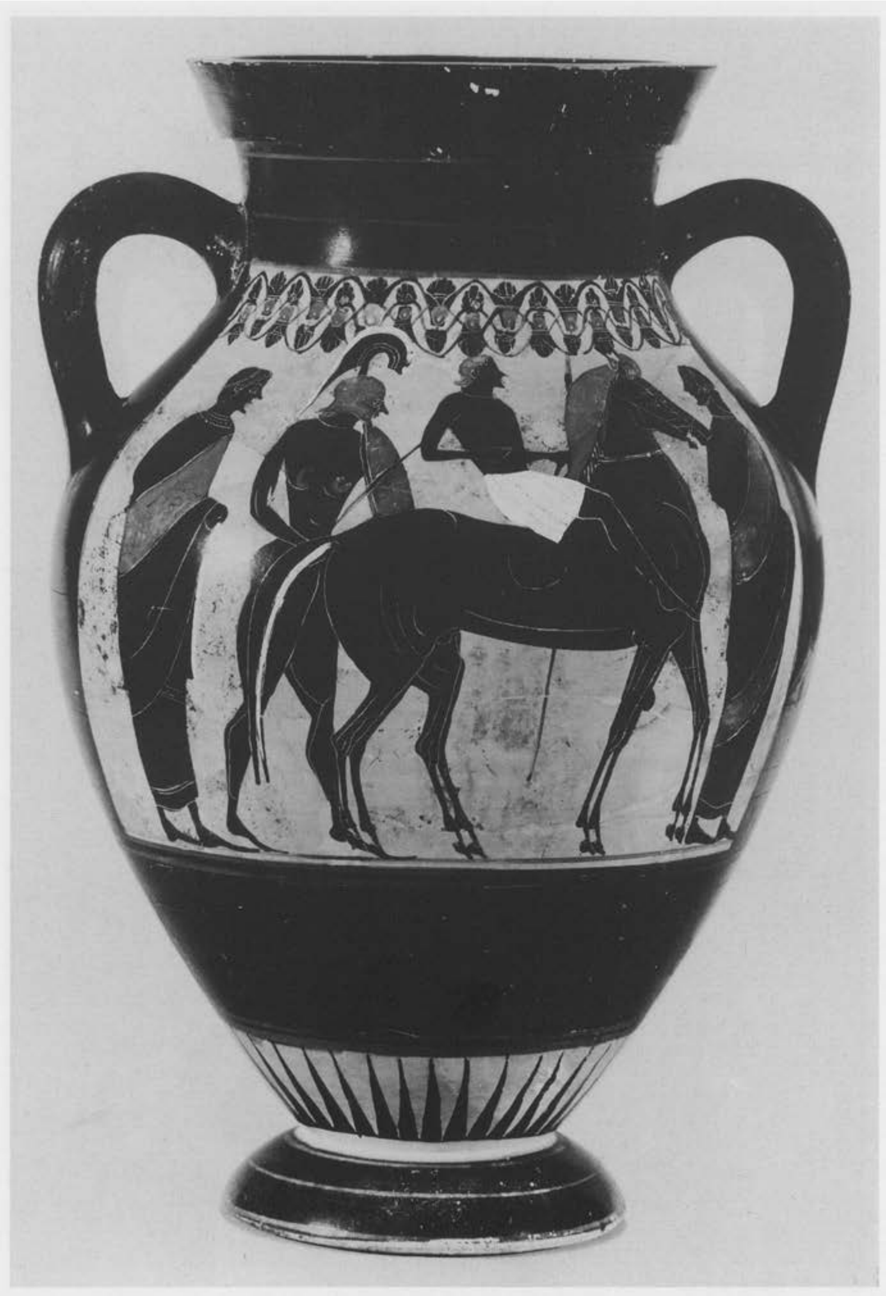

Plate 6. Departure of a warrior: reverse, Boston 1970.8, Painter of the Vatican Mourner. Photograph courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. William E. Nickerson Fund No. 2.

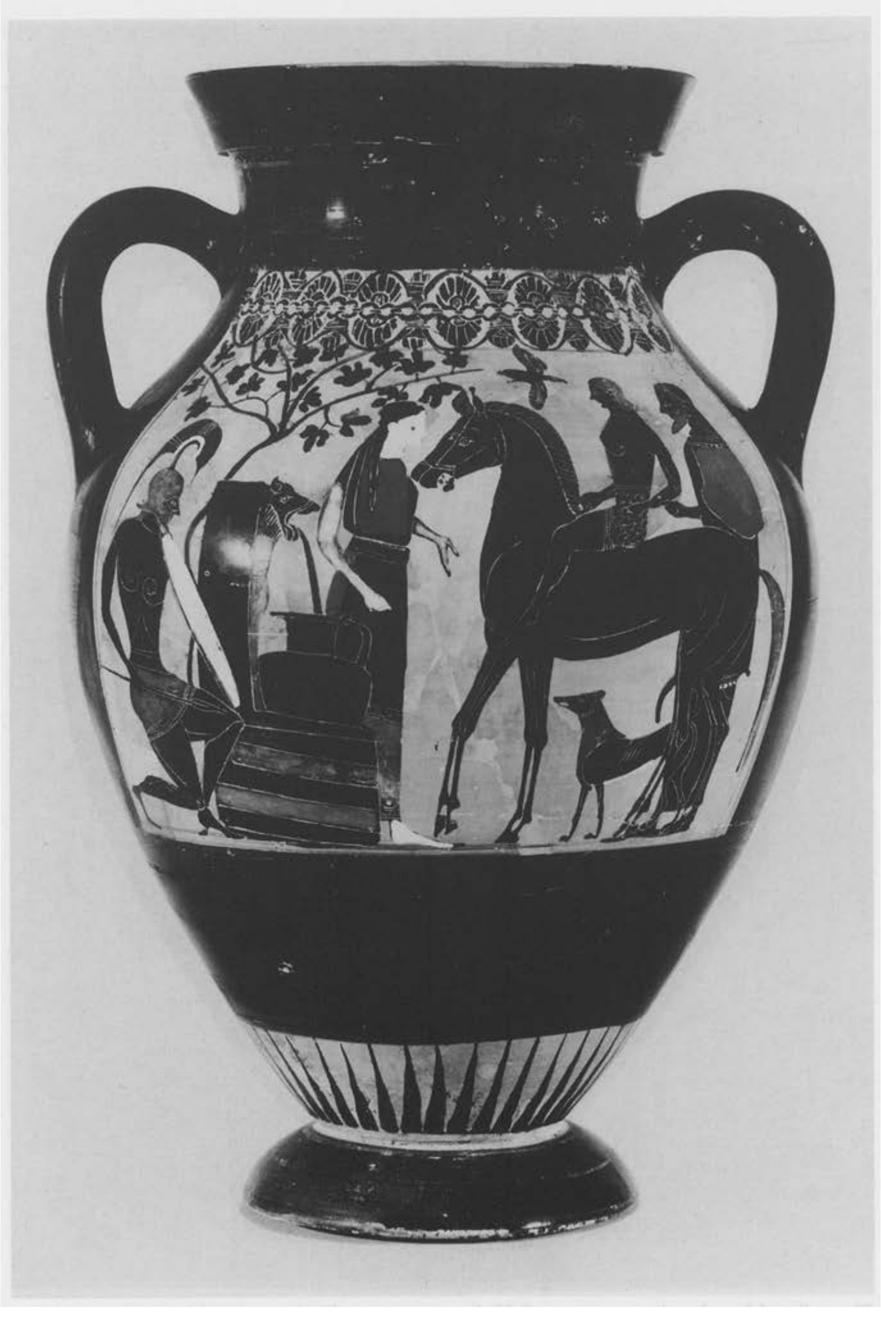

Plate 7. Achilleus' ambush of Troilos: obverse, Boston 1970.8, Painter of the Vatican Mourner. Photograph courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. William E. Nickerson Fund No. 2.

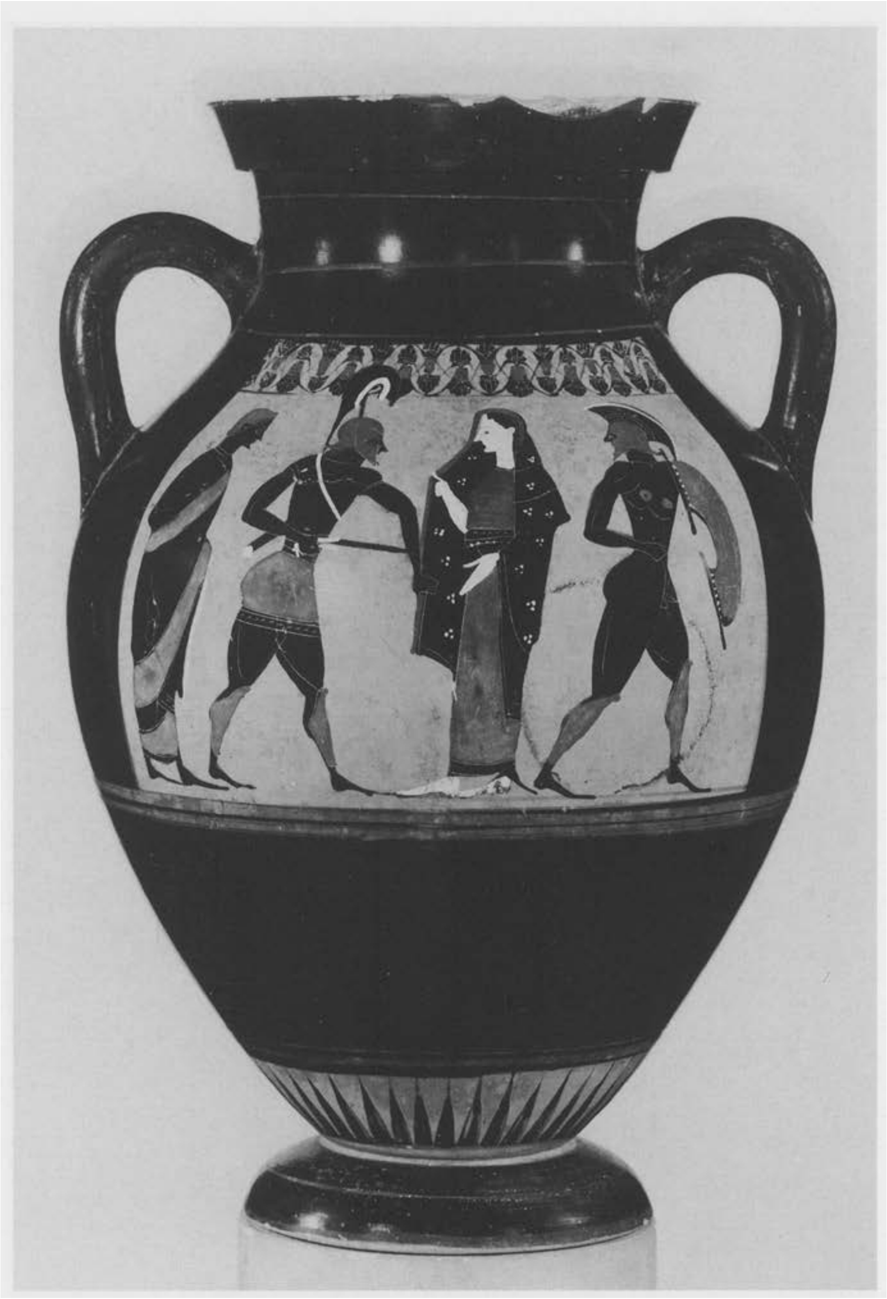

Plate 8. Menelaos' recovery of Helen: reverse, Vatican 16589, Painter of the Vatican Mourner. Photograph courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, by kind permission of the Vatican Museums.

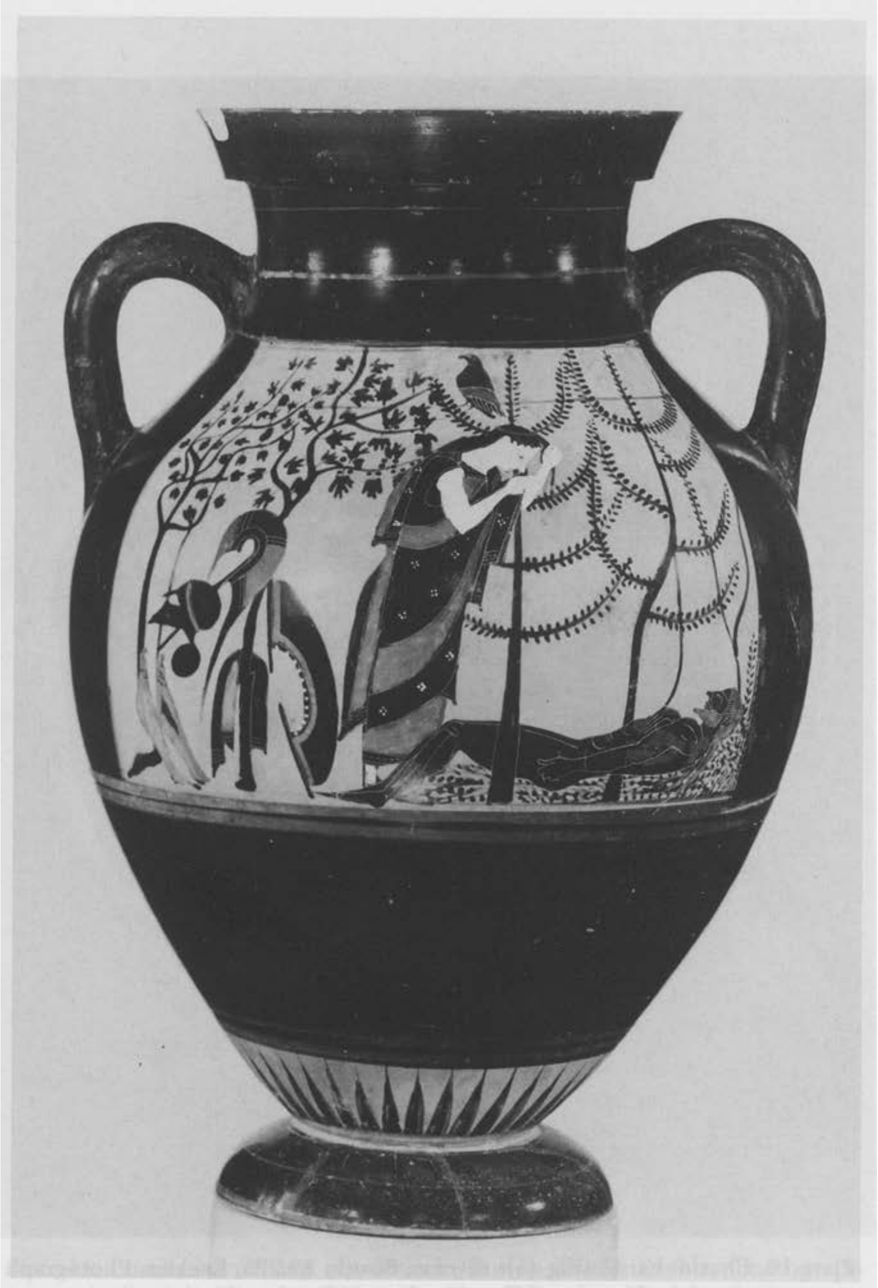

Plate 9. Woman mourning over fallen warrior: obverse, Vatican 16589, Painter of the Vatican Mourner. Photograph courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, by kind permission of the Vatican Museums.

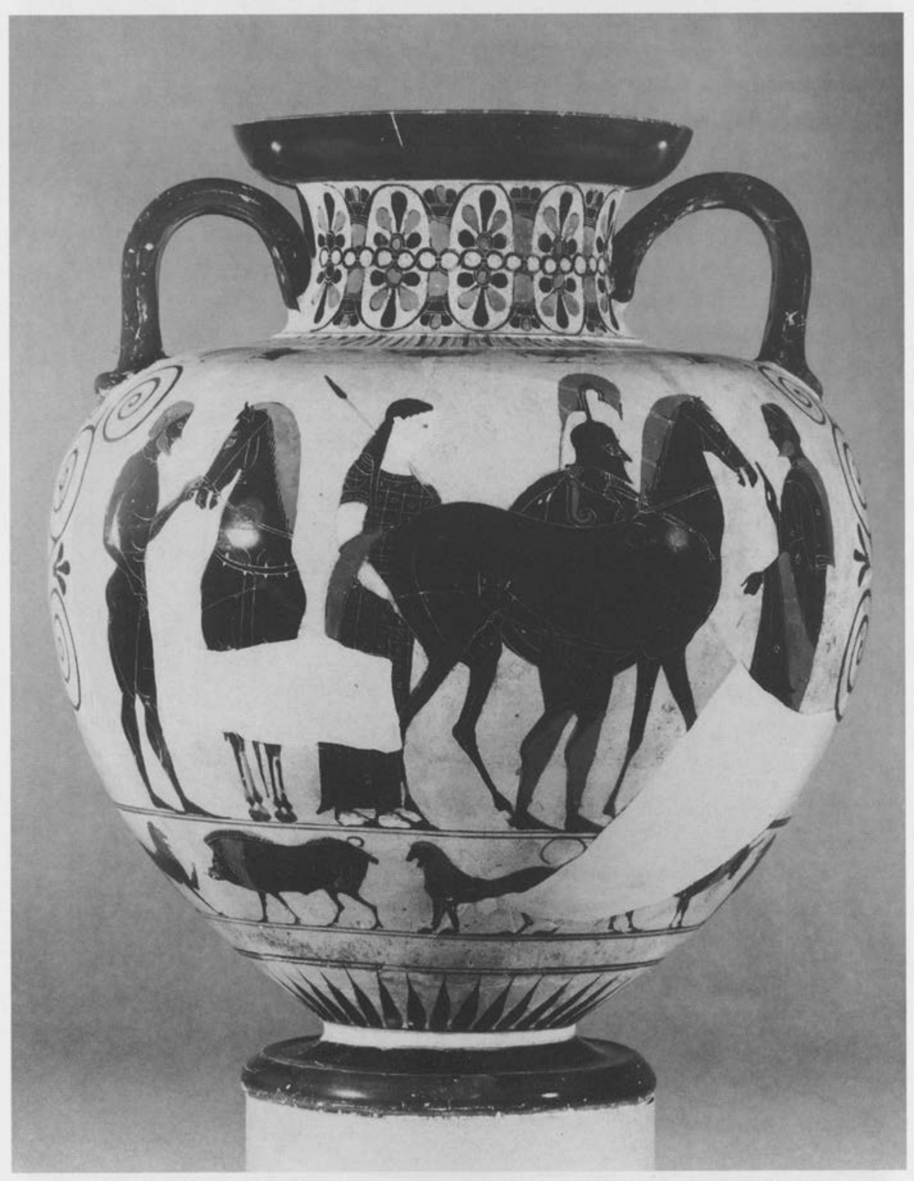

Plate 10. Chariot-harnessing (1): reverse, Boston 89.273, Exekias. Photograph courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Purchased by contribution.

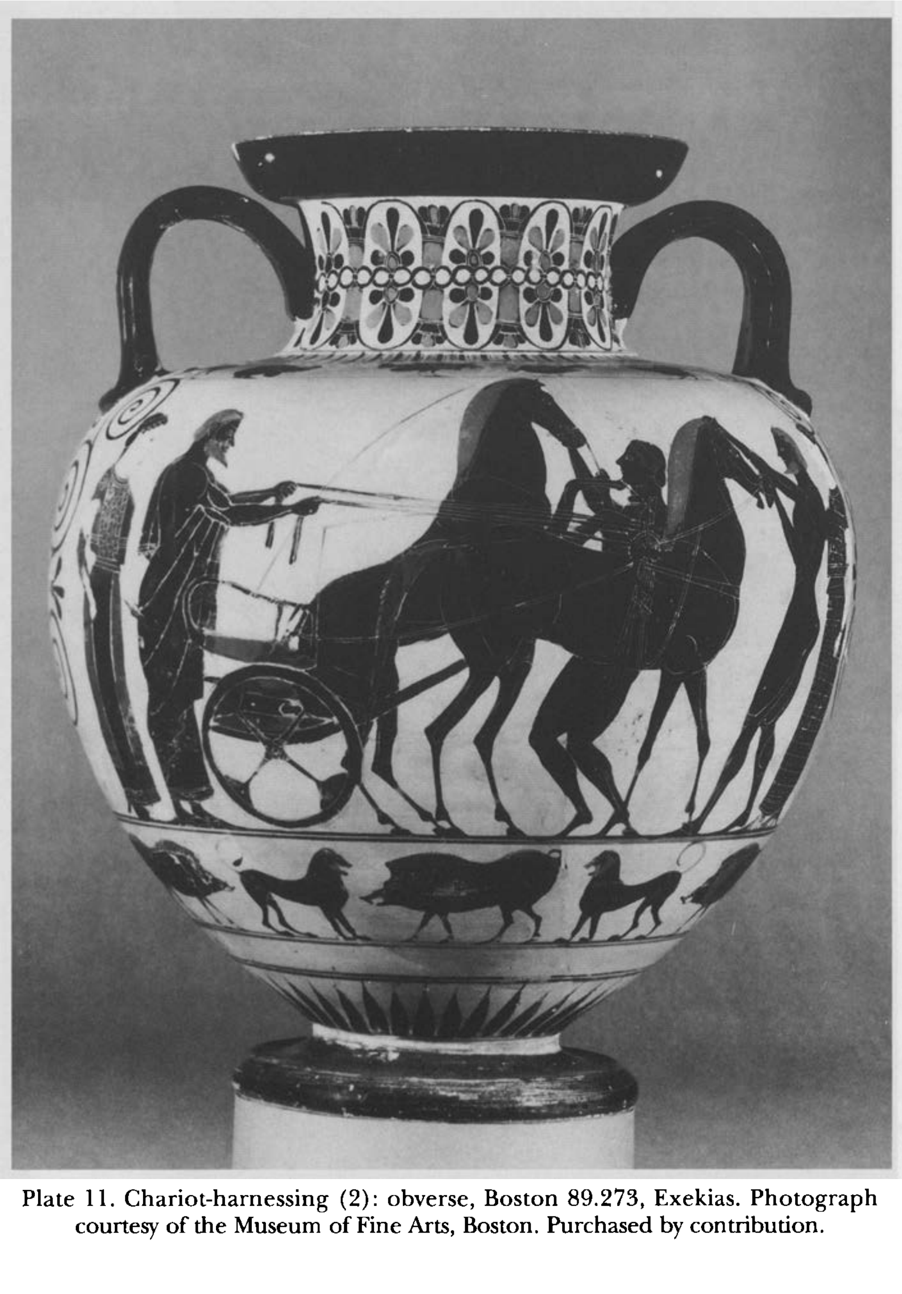

Plate 11. Chariot-harnessing (2): obverse, Boston 89.273, Exekias. Photograph courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Purchased by contribution.

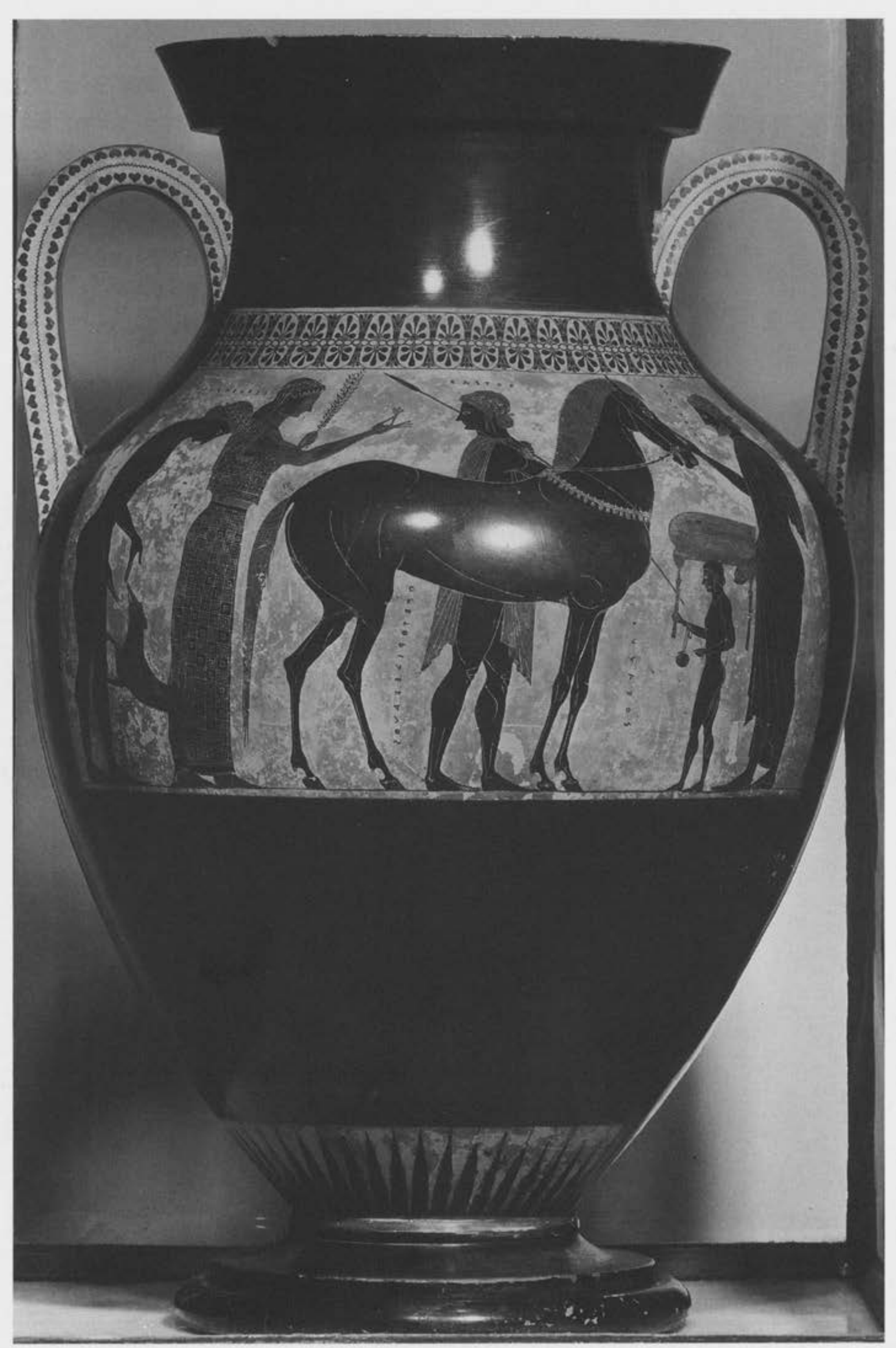

Plate 12. The Dioskouroi: obverse, Vatican 344, signed by Exekias. Photograph courtesy of the Hirmer Fotoarchiv, Munich, by kind permission of the Vatican Museums.

Plate 13. Dionysos' boat: eye-cup interior, Munich 2044, signed by Exekias. Photograph courtesy of the Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek, Munich.

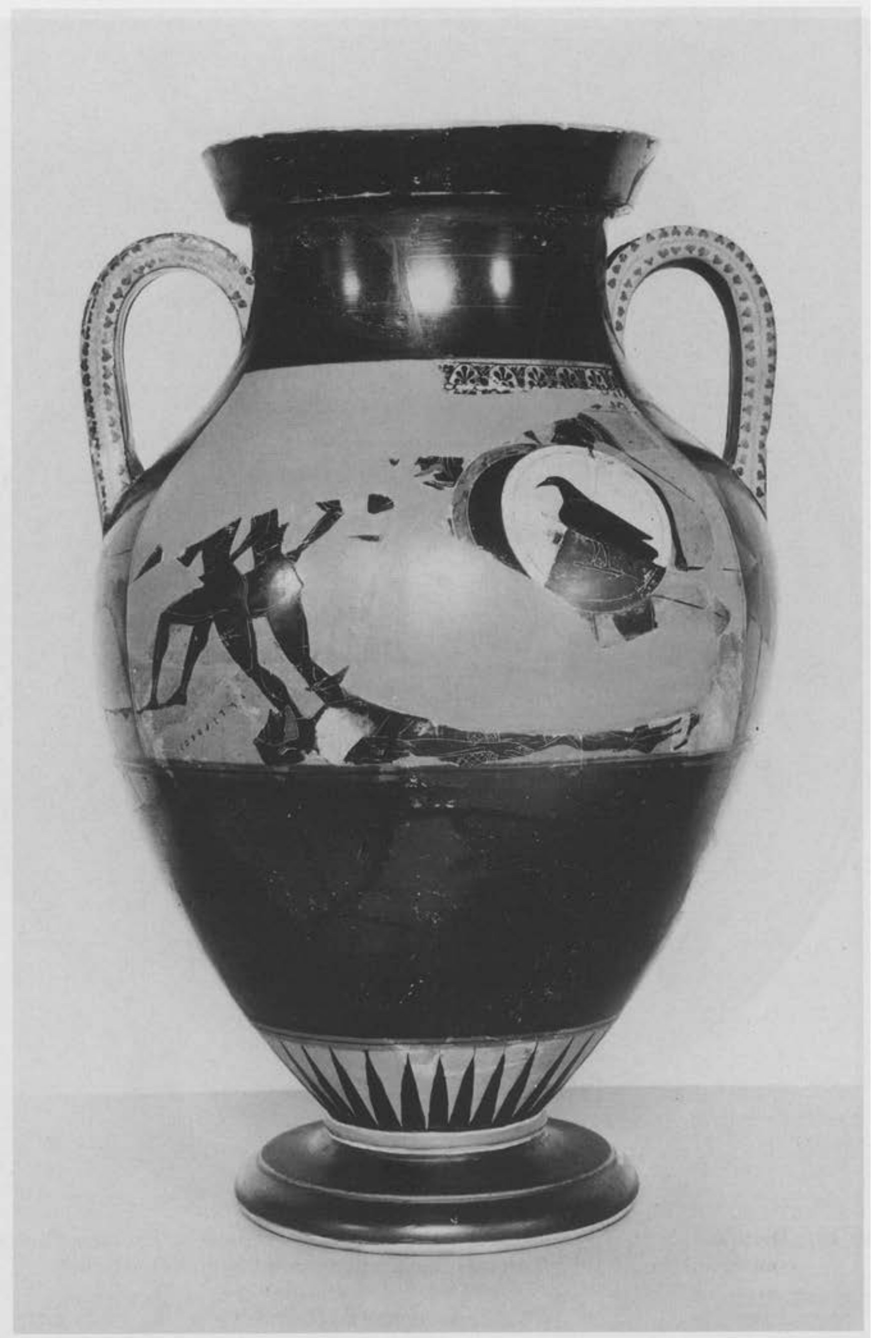

Plate 14. Death of Antilochos: reverse, Philadelphia 3442, Exekias. Photograph courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania Museum (Neg. # S8 2758).

Plate 15. Death of Achilleus: obverse, Philadelphia 3442, Exekias. Photograph courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania Museum (Neg. # S8 2758).

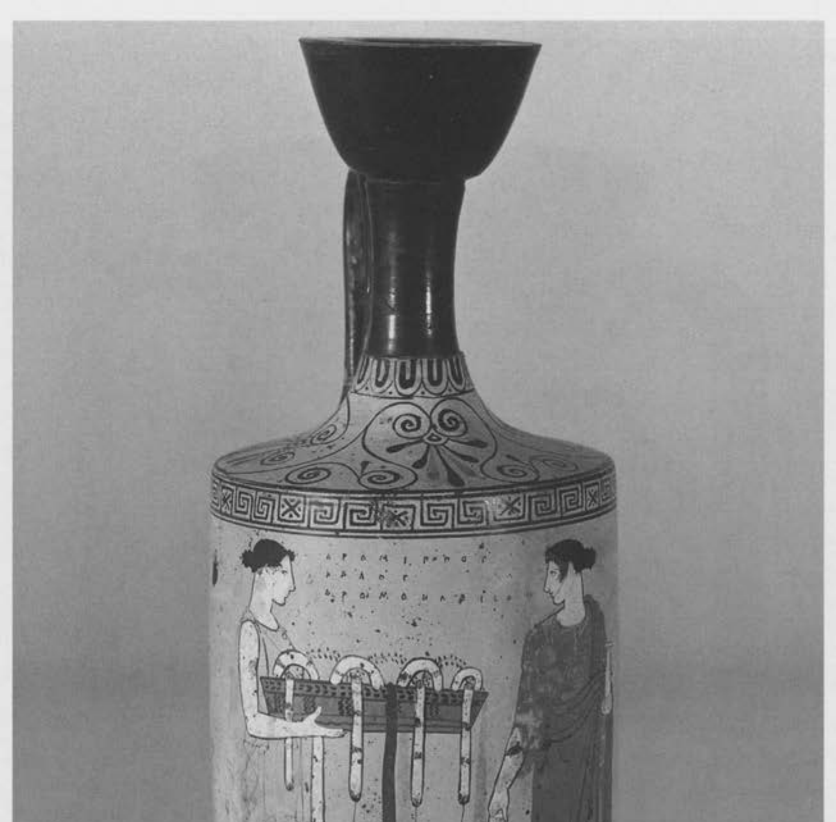

Plate 16. White-ground lekythos with stoichedon inscription: Melbourne D93/1971, Achilles Painter. Photograph courtesy National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest 1971.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE VASE AS VENTRILOQUIST: *KALOS*-INSCRIPTIONS AND THE CULTURE OF FAME

Niall W. Slater

Kalos-inscriptions have long intrigued archaeologists and art historians for a variety of reasons. As rare references to individual contemporary Athenians, they have been pressed for both chronology of vase painting and for historical data about the late sixth and early fifth centuries—with valuable but limited results. There has been lively discussion of supposed 'tag-*kalos*' inscriptions, which might label individual figures on vases as actual Athenian personages, but a recent article by Martin Kilmer has very effectively cast doubt on the soundness of many such identifications.[1] As for the communicative function or original intention of *kalos*-inscriptions, most scholars have viewed them as personal declarations about the beauty and sexual attractiveness of the individuals named, although opinions have been divided as to whether the 'authors' of those declarations were the vase painters themselves or the customers who commissioned the vases from the painters.[2] Insufficient attention has been paid to the audience for, and the reception of, these messages beyond the individual praised. In a society where writing is a relatively new phenomenon within a still predominately oral culture, where the mechanics and process of reading operate quite differently from the ways in which we experience them today, *kalos*-inscriptions put the

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[1] Kilmer (1993: 173-99). Cf. Immerwahr (1990: 73 and *passim*), in favor of tag-*kalos*.

[2] Even if we attribute 'authorship' to the painters, we can still further distinguish between genuinely personal declarations of affection and echoes of public opinion that the painter only endorses. All of these options had already received ample discussion in time to be summarised in Robinson and Fluck (1937: 2-6 and *passim*). Webster (1972: 45 and *passim*) suggests that the *kalos*-inscription may indicate the purchaser of the vase in certain cases. I know of only one inscription that seems to specify whose opinion this is: a red-figure skyphos in Berlin (Berlin 2316, *ARV*² 1559) bears the inscription: ΑΙΣΙ[Μ]ΙΔΕΣ ΚΑΛΟΣ ΔΟΚΕΙ ΧΣΥΝΝΟΟΝΙΙ. Fürtwängler interpreted the last word as ξυννοῦντι.

named individuals on display for a wider audience and invited the audience's participation in a larger economy of the creation and circulation of fame.[3]

Let me begin by suggesting that *kalos*-inscriptions may seem to be simpler and less interesting acts of communication than they actually are because of the vantage point from which we customarily observe them. They appear on Greek vases from just after 550 BC down to the third quarter of the fifth century [see figs. 1, 4].[4] Their disappearance from vases at that point, however, does not indicate their disappearance from public display. *Kalos*-graffiti appear scratched on walls and elsewhere for some time thereafter, and many more must have been written up in more ephemeral media. Aristophanes gives us humorous pictures in his plays of two such graffiti writers at work, which have strongly influenced our view of the practice. In the *Acharnians* (line 144), an ambassador returned from Thrace reports that King Sitalkes writes "*Athenaioi kaloi*" on his walls as a way of showing his devotion to the Athenian cause. Similarly, a slave in the *Wasps* tells how old Philokleon writes a *kalos*-graffito on a door to express his unbridled enthusiasm for the law courts (*Wasps* 97-99). At first glance, then, these contemporary pictures of the practice may make the writing of a *kalos*-inscription seem no more interesting than present-day wall graffiti saying "So-and-so is hot" or some similarly profound sentiment.

Lumping them together with wall graffiti, however, suppresses all that seems strange about placing *kalos*-inscriptions on vases before firing. There are no other seemingly extraneous sentiments regularly painted on vases. *Kalos*-inscriptions form a distinct group within the range of painted inscriptions on Attic vases, which begin to proliferate in the 7th century and fall broadly into three categories: labels, signatures, and dialogue. A brief consideration of other types of inscription may help to defamiliarise *kalos*-inscriptions, allowing us to see just what is so surprising about them.

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3 The very brief but suggestive remarks of Connor (1987: 40-50; 44 n. 23) postulate that *kalos*-inscriptions may record a general public acclaim. This shift of attention to audience rather than sender of the message is welcome (see below) but does not to my mind fully account for the uniqueness of these inscriptions within the range of those found on vases.

4 Immerwahr (1990: 31-32) places the beginning of the practice in Group E, the workshop from which Exekias came. Shapiro (1987: 107-18; 117 n. 37) lists a handful of vases with *kalos*-inscriptions that seem to be later than 440.

Labels might be considered the most 'obvious' use of inscriptions. The naming of persons and things on vases seems to explode onto the scene suddenly. An exuberance of labels is a feature especially of the early stage of literacy, celebrating the power of this new technology. The François Vase, for example, displays no less than 130 labels on its surface. While the vast majority are proper names, the artist in his enthusiasm has also labelled a fountain, an altar, and even a rock.[5] There are some labels for scenes on vases, but these are very rare and tend to be quite early.[6] After this early burst of activity, the degree of labelling then declines, perhaps as consumers cultivate visual literacy and learn to recognise Athene or Ariadne without a label.[7] Only unusual figures, such as the poets Sappho and Alkaios [fig. 1],[8] then require labels.

The second category of vase inscriptions, signatures, seems as obvious as that of labels, if not more so. One of the earliest uses of literacy (and even pre-literate symbols) must have been assertion of ownership. Signatures, whether of potter or painter, extend this notion of ownership to the artist's assertion of responsibility for the throwing and decoration of fine painted pottery; a cup by Epiktetos offers one example, with the signature decoratively disposed around the central scene [fig. 2].[9]

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5 François Vase (Florence 4209: *ABV* 76.1, 682; *Para.* 29; *Add.*^{2} 21). On its inscriptions: Wachter (1991: 86-113). As Hurwit (1990: 180-97; 186 n. 37) points out, however, the artist of the *Odyssey* landscapes used similar labels c. 50 BC. We may also compare the narrative art works in Trimalchio's atrium in Petronius 29.4 where "*omnia diligenter curiosus pictor cum inscriptione reddiderat.*"

6 For instance a proto-Attic stand with the inscription 'Menelas' over a chorus, presumably the title of the work they are singing in Doric (Ferrari [1987: 180-82 and pl. IV]), or the 'Games for Patroklos' on the well-known fragment of a dinos by Sophilos (Athens N.M. 15499: *ABV* 39. 16, 681; *Para.* 18; *Add.*^{2} 10). Immerwahr (1992: 50) notes a fragmentary cup by Onesimos (Berlin 2280+2281+Vatican: *ARV*^{2} 19.1-2; *Add.*^{2} 153) with an inscription (restored) describing locale thus: Διὸς ἱερὸ[ν τέμε]νος. Scene labels reappear in South Italian vase painting, however: for example, the 'Tomb of Patroklos' on a volute krater of the Darius Painter (Naples 3254: *RVAp* II 495, no. 18/39 [*RVSIS* 89 and pl. 204]).

7 The process of recognition is of course more complex than this implies, as Goldhill and Osborne (1994: 1-8) entertainingly point out, but by the mid-sixth century the iconography of many major figures of myth is sufficiently well-established to make inscriptions unnecessary. Note, though, that Athene (like most other figures) is still given a large and legible painted inscription on the frieze of the Siphnian Treasury at Delphi about 525 BC: see now the splendid reconstructions in Brinkmann (1994). An intriguing question still to be explored is whether vases might have been created for a visually more experienced audience than was public sculpture in the same period.

8 A vase by the Brygos Painter (Munich 2416: *ARV*^{2} 385.228, 1649; *Para.* 367; *Add.*^{2} 228); Lissarague (1990:125-26 and fig. 95).

9 Baltimore, Johns Hopkins, B3: *ARV*^{2} 75. 56; *Add.*^{2} 168; Lissarague (1990: 13-14 and fig. 3).

Figure 1. *Alkaios and Sappho from a red-figure kalathos attributed to the Brygos Painter (Munich 2416).*

Figure 2. *Symposiast from the tondo of a red-figure cup signed by Epiktetos (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins B 3).*

Secondarily, these signatures also function as advertising, alerting anyone who saw such pieces in the possession of another to where one might acquire one's own fine pottery. Signatures too decline over time.[10] In a culture as self-assertive as ancient Greece, the explanation for this decline is unlikely simply to be increasing literacy and a modest belief that their work could speak for itself, but perhaps rather marks a decline in the status of vase painting.

Our final category is dialogue: inscriptions represent characters uttering words, snatches of lyric verse, songs, and even dialogue from plays. Such inscriptions occur from the famous Exekias amphora, showing an armed Aias and Achilleus at a game board and speaking their scores,[11] down to comic theatre vases of the fourth century. These inscriptions resemble modern cartoons, in that they often emerge directly from characters' mouths, even running retrograde early on, in order to make the connection between speaker and speech as tight as possible.

Figure 3. Dolphin-riders from a red-figure psykter attributed to Oltos (New York L.1979.17.1 [Schimmel])

Alkaios in figure 1 seems to be sustaining a note, as a series of omicrons emerges from his mouth, but Oltos' dolphin riders [fig. 3] chant choral poetry[12] while a reclining singer drawn by Euphronios begins a lyric

[10] Robinson and Fluck (1937: 1) note that *kalos*-inscriptions increase in red-figure over black-figure, while signatures decrease. The figures assembled by Whitley (1997: 642, Table 3) substantiate this view.

[11] Vatican 344: *ABV* 145. 13, 686; *Para.* 60; *Add.*^{2} 40; illustrated and discussed in Kilmer (1993: 177-79 and pl. I. 1).

[12] Psykter by Oltos (New York L.1979.17.1 [on loan from Schimmel]: *ARV*^{2} [54.7*bis*], 1622; *Para.* 259, 326; *Add.*^{2} 163), illustrated and discussed in Lissarague (1990: 115-16 and fig. 88). The words spilling from their lips were first identified as choral poetry by Sifakis (1967: 36-37 and pl. VI).

verse, perhaps by Sappho [fig. 4].[13] A symposiast on a cup by the Brygos Painter seems to sing a line of a scolion, which will then be taken up by another guest at the party [fig. 5].[14]

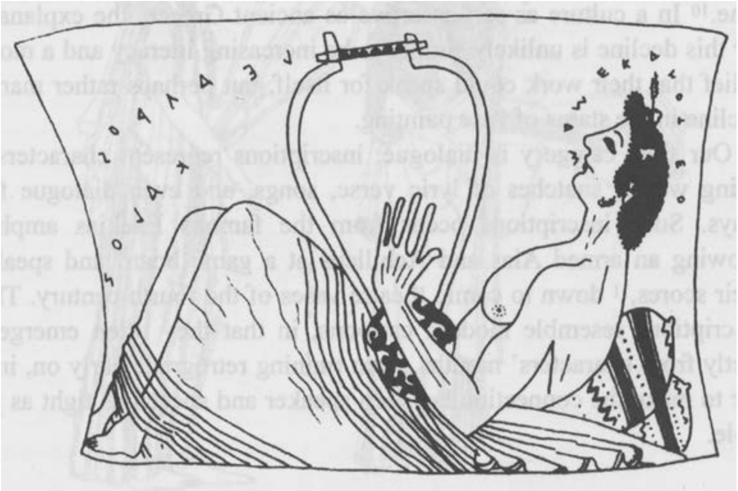

Figure 4. Reclining singer on the neck of a neck-amphora attributed to Euphronios (Louvre G 30).

Kalos-inscriptions are not obviously assimilable to any of the above categories. 'Tag-*kalos*' inscriptions, if they exist, label the figures they are attached to, but the scenes in which they appear are not transformed by the information provided. These are in any case again a minority: most *kalos*-inscriptions are not attached to any particular figure on the vase (see fig. 1, for example, with the *kalos*-inscription disposed vertically between the two labelled poets) and therefore do not have a labelling function.

The view that they represent direct statements by the vase painters might by a significant stretch group them with signatures as self-assertion by, and communication from, the creators of the vases to the viewing audience. There are more problems with such a view than are customarily acknowledged. Much debate has centred on the social status of potters and painters and whether they would have moved in the same social

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[13] Louvre G 30: *ARV*^{2} 15.9, 1619; *Para.* 322; *Add.*^{2} 152; Lissarague (1990: 133 and fig. 103).

[14] Florence 3949: *ARV*^{2} 376. 90; Lissarague (1990: 128-29 and fig. 99).

Figure 5. Symposiast in the tondo of a cup attributed to the Brygos Painter (Florence 3949).

circles as the individuals praised in *kalos*-inscriptions.[15] While such social equality may have been plausible in the sixth century, it seems considerably less so as the fifth century progresses—yet *kalos*-inscriptions persist. There are moreover considerable inherent difficulties in the notion of the artist communicating with the object of his affections through the vase. Without a context of other information, the recipient would not necessarily know whether the message came from potter or painter. In Athenian vase painting these are separate functions and therefore often separate individuals. The potters are the more well-established group and the more likely to mix with the city's elite. If *kalos*-inscriptions are personal declarations, they are more likely to come from the potters rather than the painters. In support of the artists as authors of the messages, we may note that certain *kalos* names are associated primarily or even exclusively with one potter, painter, or circle of painters.[16] Yet the

[15] Eder (1992: 24) takes the Smikros psykter in Malibu (Getty Museum 82.AE.53) as proof that Euphronios was on the same social level as Leagros, but see Kilmer (1993). Admittedly, none of the identifications of honorands in *kalos*-inscriptions is absolutely secure, except perhaps those with patronymics. The much-praised beauty of the late sixth century, Leagros, is generally identified as Leagros (*PA* 9028), son of Glaucon (see fig. 4, above; also nn. 45–46, below).

[16] Shapiro (1983: 305) cites a number of examples.

surviving pots cannot all represent gifts or even sales to the honorands of the inscriptions. One can hardly imagine a more inefficient means of communicating a sentiment than by placing it on a pot before firing, then hoping it will somehow through the marketplace end up in the hands of the recipient.

The more popular view is that the purchasers of the vases are the senders of the messages. Here we imagine that a would-be *erastes* might order up a new set of vessels for a party and ask the vase painter to include *kalos*-inscriptions to the youth he is attempting to seduce. It is a little harder to see how the notion of commissioning a vase to communicate a message might have arisen,[17] although we can construct scenarios in which a practice originating in the potters' or painters' affections was detected and imitated by the customers. Yet could Leagros really have attended enough such parties to account for the number of surviving inscriptions in his honour? Moreover some inscriptions appear on ceramic pieces that the honorand most likely never would have seen: at least one Panathenaic vase carries a *kalos*-inscription,[18] and objects dedicated in shrines could not have had the honorand of a *kalos*-inscription as their primary audience.[19]

Let us abandon for the moment the debate over authorship of these messages and turn our attention to the audience. While many *kalos*-inscriptions appear on symposiastic vessels, and therefore might plausibly be inscribed in an immediate discourse of seduction and resistance within the symposion, other vessels, intended for other uses, also carry these messages. If there is a communicative act going on in a *kalos*-inscription, that communication is not just between ostensible sender and recipient. Third parties are an *intended* part of the audience. The author of the message, whoever that is, wishes not just to woo, but to be *seen* to be engaged in erotic pursuit.

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17 The messages are both more complex than simply monogramming silver yet also far more stereotyped than honorific inscriptions, if we look to the modern marketplace for analogues.

18 By the Euphiletos Painter (London 1842.3-14.1 [formerly B134]: *ABV* 322.1, 666, 694; *Para.* 142; *Add.*^{2} 87). See Immerwahr (1990: 183-84, no. 1200). The Euphiletos Painter seems to have painted the same *kalos*-inscription (restored as ΕΥΦΙΛΕΤΟΣ ΚΑΛΟΣ) on a plaque (Athens Acr. 2517 frr.: *ABV* 325. 43). 'Non-prize' Panathenaic vases also are preserved with *kalos*-inscriptions: see Webster (1972: 63-64).

19 For example, see Ohly-Dumm (1985: 236-38) on a fragmentary pyxis of the Amasis painter with a *kalos*-inscription; cf. Immerwahr (1990: 36-37).

Are *kalos*-inscriptions then an assertion of self through a declaration of taste? The public press has recently informed us that Prince William is very fond of Cindy Crawford and has posters of her decorating his room at Eton. Unlike most boys his age, he has actually had the opportunity to meet Ms. Crawford, and so his act of displaying his attachment did result in actual communication—thanks to his mother, or whoever arranged the meeting with Ms. Crawford. For most, however, displaying a poster of a famous beauty is simply an act of self-assertion, a declaration of who one is through what one admires. Could *kalos*-inscriptions be just this at Athens: a consumers' view of the culture of fame in the 6th and 5th century city?

The analogy fails on the issue of authorship once again, however. Unless we know who the 'author' of the *kalos*-inscription is, we cannot admire the author's taste. If vase owners wished to be seen as the authors of sentiments for which they meant to be admired, we would expect *kalos*-names to be more randomly distributed among vase painters as purchasers expressed their own preferences. The association of some *kalos*-names with particular workshops might lead us back to the artist, but successful recognition of the author then depends on a fairly sophisticated viewing public capable of distinguishing hands and workshops—and still leaves open the question, why would the public buy vases that displayed the artists' admirations, rather than their own?

A more careful reading of the passages from Aristophanes suggests there is more to the practice than simple self-assertion. King Sitalkes in the *Acharnians* could express his affection for Athens directly to the Athenian ambassadors. Comic fantasy it may be, but when he writes *Athenaioi kaloi* on walls, he does so in order to advertise the sentiment more widely and to be seen to be doing so. In *Wasps*, the slave Xanthias describes how his old master Philokleon, when he sees "*Demos kalos*"[20]

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[20] Xanthias actually reports the text of the first inscription in indirect speech:

καὶ νὴ Δί' ἣν ἴδῃ γέ που γεγραμμένον
υἱὸν πυριλάμπους ἐν θύρᾳ Δῆμον καλόν,
ἰὼν παρέγραψε πλησίον «κημὸς καλός». (97-99)

What the inscription actually read is therefore technically in question: ΔΗΜΟΣ ΚΑΛΟΣ or ΔΗΜΟΣ ΠΥΡΙΛΑΜΠΟΥΣ ΚΑΛΟΣ. A small group of *kalos*-inscriptions with the patronymic do appear on vases a quarter century earlier, on which see below. If Shapiro's theory is correct that these particular vase inscriptions are related to public discussion preceding the Periclean citizenship legislation and to assertions of pure Athenian heritage, by the time of the *Wasps* such questions should be settled. There can have been no question about the Athenian citizenship of Demos (*PA* 3573), son of Pyrilampes (*PA*

inscribed on a door, writes up next to it "the voting funnel is beautiful" (*kemos kalos*, *Wasps* 97-99). While Xanthias knows Philokleon is the author of the graffito, there is no indication that this is public knowledge: rather, the two texts, "*Demos kalos*" and "*kemos kalos*", compete anonymously for public attention—and therefore commitment. Philokleon, though he may be in his second childhood in other ways, is not just childishly asserting his own taste, like a teenager writing the name of his favourite rock group on his books or someone else's walls. Philokleon deliberately places his text next to an existing text to offer an alternative. Moreover, the debate seems to rest on a misreading: one suspects that to Philokleon '*Demos*' means not a particular handsome young man, the son of Pyrilampes, but 'the people.' Interpreting this as political sentiment, Philokleon decides that is not specific enough to say that "the demos is beautiful": rather, for him, it is democracy expressing itself through the voting urns in the law courts that is beautiful and admirable.

Evidence from the next century supports the notion of *kalos*-inscriptions taking part in an anonymous public debate. A well-known graffito from Nemea states "Akrotatos is beautiful", to which another hand has added "in the opinion of the writer".[21] An extremely interesting collection of nearly 60 *kalos*-inscriptions, carved into a rock face on the island of Thasos in perhaps the middle of the fourth century, also suggests competing expressions of views. Unlike vase inscriptions, however, these anonymous writers used a wide variety of adjectives of praise (including *hedus* and *eucharis*).[22] The variety and freedom of expression here helps to underscore the rigidity of practice on Attic vases.

12493), who was mocked on other grounds in Eupolis fr. 227 K-A. It seems certain therefore that the graffito read simply ΔΗΜΟΣ ΚΑΛΟΣ, and Xanthias here adds the patronymic for his own clarity. There is also play going on here with the themes of the *Wasps*: Demos is not chosen randomly, but rather both because his name rhymes with *kemos* and because it is also the name of the sovereign people of Athens, who express themselves through the law courts and therefore the voting urns.

21 Miller (1979: 101 and pl. 40). I accept Miller's view that there are two different hands, a necessary foundation for the interpretation that there is a contestation of public opinion (note the difference in size of the letters). Cf. also Worthington (1986: 41). Evidence of a sharper public debate survives on a painted pinax, the so-called Warrior Tablet from the Acropolis (Athens Acr. 67). It bears a *kalos*-inscription in which the original name 'Megakles' has been erased and 'Glaukytes' has been substituted for it. Buschor has suggested that this is the Megakles ostracised in 486 BC; see the illustration and discussion in Swindler (1929: 153-154).

22 Garlan and Masson (1982: 3-22); I am most grateful to Robin Osborne for this reference. ΚΑΛΟΣ is the most frequent epithet, but ΗΔΥΣ occurs eight times and ΕΥΧΑΡΙΣ four. The letter forms suggest the date of mid-fourth century.

We may therefore be tempted to assimilate *kalos*-inscriptions to our third category of vase inscriptions: dialogue or represented speech. An early inscription on a little master cup urges the reader to "drink and be happy" [fig. 6].[23] Among other early 'speaking object' inscriptions is one that addresses the viewer as "*o pai kale*".[24] Other vases represent a figure speaking of or to another person who is termed *kale* or *kalos*, as on a hydria by Phintias: "I throw this for you, handsome Euthymides".[25] Yet such examples are very rare; most *kalos*-inscriptions float freely in the visual space (see again figs. 1 and 4), attached to no speaker and not obviously addressing the reader.

Figure 6. Inscription from a lip-cup (Leningrad inv. 1412)

One most interesting vase deserves mention here, if only to emphasise its exceptionality. A black-figure oinochoe with a white-ground shoulder[26] from around 520 preserves what seems to be a conversation, interwoven among palmettes: καλὸς Νικόλα<ς>. Δωρόθεος καλός. κἀμοὶ δοκεῖ, ναί. χἄτερος παῖς καλός, Μέμνων. κἀμοὶ καλὸς φίλος.[27] There are no figures represented on the vase to function as the

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23 Leningrad inv. 1412 (formerly 210: *ABV* 669; *Add.*^{2} 148); Lissarague (1990: 62-65 and fig. 47F).

24 An aryballos, signed by Phintias (ΦΙΑΤΙΑΣ ⋮ ΕΠΟΙΕΣΕΝΜΕ): Athens Acr. 873 frr.: *ARV*^{2} 25. 3; see Immerwahr (1990: 86 and n. 22).

25 ΣΟΙ ΤΕΝΔΙ, ΕΥΘΥΜΙΔΕΙ ΚΑΛΟΙ (Munich 2421: *ARV*^{2} 23.7, 1620; *Para.* 323; *Add.*^{2} 155); Immerwahr (1990: 67 and fig. 90); cf. Immerwahr (1992: 50), and on the kottabos-toast in general, Csapo and Miller (1991). The epithet *kalos* is not fundamental to the sentiment here, however; compare the question "For whom do I toss this, Leagros?" on a psykter by Euphronios (Leningrad 644: *ARV*^{2} 16.15, 1619; *Para.* 509; *Add.*^{2} 153), for which see Kilmer (1993: 181-82).

26 Munich 2447: *ABV* 425 (now available in *CVA* Munich 12 [Germany 65]). I am most grateful to Professor Henry Immerwahr for calling this vase to my attention (also discussed in Immerwahr [1990: 75, no. 438]).

27 Transcription adapted from Beazley. The inscription is orthograde, but the last two words of the conventional transcription are actually the beginning of the writing on the vase itself.

(probably two) members of this dialogue. The words simply float in the white space, without any further context, and seem to be without parallel.[28]

Let us review and summarise for a moment. Most painted vase inscriptions can be classified as labels, signatures, or represented speech (which I may too loosely have termed dialogue). No one has seriously suggested that *kalos*-inscriptions are really signatures in disguise, although a comparison with the role of signatures in asserting the artist's identity has been useful in sorting out what *kalos*-inscriptions could and could not be expected to do. Whether or not some *kalos*-inscriptions might have labelled individual figures, most cannot plausibly be attached to a single figure—even if there is a human figure in the visual field. Labelling does not explain the practice. That leaves us to consider *kalos*-inscriptions as represented speech.

This in turn leads us back to the question of the framing of the utterance. The object itself or a speaker represented on the object are only in the rarest instances the plausible source of the utterance. While I trust it has become clear that the intended audience for these utterances is far wider than the individual praised, we are still left for the moment with the unresolved question of the identity of the sender or the source of the message.

The persistence of the dilemma suggests a problem with the framing of the question. Perhaps our difficulty lies precisely in thinking of *kalos*-inscriptions as messages *with* an identifiable author. At the interface between a fully oral and a newly literate culture, a piece of writing is never just a message. Rather, writing is a mnemonic aid to a performance. Let me here appeal to the stronger formulation of this position by Jesper Svenbro in his landmark work, *Phrasikleia*: "Greek writing was first and foremost a machine for producing sounds".[29] Svenbro convincingly demonstrates through a study of the terms for reading and the texts and settings especially of funerary inscriptions that, again in his words, "The inscription is a machine for producing *kleos*".[30] In short,

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28 Immerwahr (1990: 74-75, figs. 100-101) notes that it is close to another oinochoe in the same technique, London 1851.4-16.8 (formerly B 631: *ABV* 423, 697; *Para.* 182; *Add.*^{2} 109) which preserves a *kale*-inscription. The middle of the inscription is now damaged, but it must have included more than the name and *kale*, both of which are fairly well preserved. There does not seem to be enough space for a dialogue, however.

29 Svenbro (1993).

30 Svenbro (1993: 62).

early inscriptions are designed to be the script of a future performance at which a literate individual 'shares out' the words of the inscription to his hearers.[31] In the case of funerary inscriptions, that performance is meant to perpetuate the name and fame of the deceased. Very early on, the object itself may speak on behalf of or about the deceased ("Here I am, the tomb of Krites"), but the object may also give orders ("You, who are passing, stop and weep for me").[32] Later funerary inscriptions suppress the speaking *ego*, but continue to presuppose a performance, which creates *kleos*.

I suggest that vase inscriptions function in ways quite parallel to inscriptions on stone to create future performances. Early examples on vases also speak in the first person: "I am the beautiful drinking cup" [fig. 7].[33] They too give orders that in their context demand to be obeyed; for example, the inscription on a little master cup that admonishes: XAIPE KAI ΠΙΕΙ [EY], "Rejoice and drink well".[34] In the symposion a painted and inscribed vase is not just an implement; it is an occasion for discussion and performance.[35] Guests using vessels they had not seen before might discuss the scenes portrayed thereon, an essential part

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31 Ultimately the only hearer may be the 'reader' himself. This takes us to the vexed question of silent reading in antiquity: at what point did a reader no longer need to vocalise in order to understand the words he read himself? Svenbro (1993: 163-64) (closely following Knox [1968: 421-35]) points to Theseus's silent reading of Phaidra's letter in the *Hippolytus* 856-86 and 'Demosthenes'' silent reading of Paphlagon's oracles in Aristophanes' *Knights* 115-45. Svenbro argues convincingly that the scene in the *Knights* reflects a practice that, while intelligible to the audience, is still relatively new. We might add to the discussion the very interesting fragment of Euripides' *Erechtheus*, a play to be dated very close indeed to *Knights*, where the old men of the chorus refer to the pleasures of reading, for them still emphatically a matter of reading out loud (fr. 369.6-7 Nauck):

δελτῶν τ' ἀναπτύσσοιμι γᾶ-
ρυν ᾇν σοφοὶ κλέονται.

And may I unfold the voice of tablets,
through which the wise are remembered. [trans. Martin Cropp]

32 I take the translation of the first inscription (Pfohl [1967: no. 115]: ΣΕΜΑ ΤΟΔ ΕΙΜΙ ΚΡΙΤΟ) from Svenbro (1993: 32). The second is virtually a formula: ΣΤΕΘΙ ΚΑΙ ΟΙΚΤΙΡΟΝ (Pfohl [1967: nos. 32 (IG I^2 971), 72, 192]).

33 From a little master cup of Eucheiros (Rhodes 10527, *ABV* 162. 1 (below); *Add.*^{2} 47); see Lissarague (1990. 65 and n. 39, fig. 47G).

34 One example is the cup fragment by the Centaur Painter in the University of Natal museum (Durban 1983.9), published in Mackay (1993b: 149-52, fig. 1). Lissarague (1990: 63-64) compares this sentiment with Theognis 533-34.

35 See Lissarague (1990: 59-67 and figs. 41-49) on the conversational interactions between drinker and vase.

Figure 7. Inscription from a lip-cup potted by Eucheiros (Rhodes 10527).

of which was reading out the inscriptions. Signatures demanded recognition and might prompt discussion of other works by the same artists. Labels obviously helped tell stories, primarily mythic but perhaps also about contemporary individuals.

Dialogue portrayed on the vessels was also part of the story-telling, and might be designed to prompt a performance more complex than simply a vocalisation of only those words represented on the vase. When a man leading a horse on a Panathenaic vase of the Swing Painter makes the announcement (with the words spilling from his lips), "The horse of Dysneiketos wins",[36] can we doubt that the commissioner of this vase hoped to prompt a discussion of his victory by the viewers of the vase? When on a cup by Euphronios we see Theseus say to Ariadne, XAIPE ΣY ("Hey, you!"),[37] the words are not so much a message as a prompt for discussion and imaginative recreation by the viewer of this encounter. Represented poetry might prompt its reperformance in the symposion: the beginnings of lyric verses emerging from the reclining singers on an amphora by Euphronios [fig. 4] or a Brygan cup [fig. 5] seem designed to encourage the viewers to take up familiar songs,[38] and

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36 London 1849.11-22.1 (formerly B144: *ABV* 307.59: *Add.*^{2} 82): ΔYNEIKTY : HIΠOΣ : NIKAI, usually interpreted as Δυ[σ]νεικέτου ἵπ[π]ος νικᾷ; illustrated in Immerwahr (1990: 57 [no. 298] and fig. 70), also Boardman (1974: figs. 145.1-2). Louvre F283 (*ARV*^{2} 1584; *Para.* 317), a small black-figure Panathenaic with a chariot-racing scene, seems to display a similar sentiment. Beazley, relying on Bothmer, reports these words inscribed on the vase (which I have not seen, and the published photos are not helpful): N[I]KON MYNON HIKETEΣ KAΛON EMOI ΔOKEI (with the last four letters are not certain). Bothmer takes the first two as the names of the charioteers and the last part as a *kalos*-inscription. If KAΛON is correct, however, surely this is a statement about the admirability of the team or the victory, not one individual.

37 London 1837.6-9.58 (formerly E 41: *ARV*^{2} 58.51, 1622; *Add.*^{2} 164) a red-figure cup attributed by Beazley to Oltos, but now by Robertson to Euphronios. Cf. Neils (1981). Immerwahr (1990: 61 [no. 337]) interprets the inscription as the painter's comment, rather than Theseus's dialogue.

38 For a list of 13 "Singers of Lyric Verse in Attic Red Figure," see Csapo and Miller (1991: 381-82, with full references).

as Jeffrey Hurwit asks, "What self-respecting symposiast ... could have resisted taking up the chorus of Oltos' Dolphin-riders" [fig. 3] rhythmically chanting ΕΠΙ ΔΕΛΦΙΝΟΣ?[39] All of these social results are predicated on the performance of the inscription out loud.

Interpreting *kalos*-inscriptions not simply as messages but rather as themselves occasions for performance substantially changes our view of them. Their heyday is the end of the archaic period, during the flowering of red-figure, and many occur on symposion vessels, where they can join other kinds of performances, such as scolia and lyric verse. When read out loud in the symposion, the inscription takes over the voice of the reader and creates a moment of *kleos* for the individual praised. In the ensuing discussion the reader himself might well disavow the opinion that he has just read out—but in the mechanics of Greek reading at this period this need not surprise. The opinion is already out there to be discussed, because the inscription has demanded this performance. The thousands of *kalos*-inscriptions that adorn surviving Greek vases are each tiny impresarios of performance, designed to bring the names of the honorands alive and insinuate them into the discussion, whether at the symposion or elsewhere.

The end of painted *kalos*-inscriptions just a decade or so before our evidence for the rise of silent reading is to me very suggestive: once texts could be read without vocalisation—particularly short, formulaic texts—the *kalos*-inscription no longer had any function. If it could not compel a performance from its reader, it had no entry into the ongoing competition for fame.

Of course we must not neglect the changing political temper of the times as well. The symposion was a relatively elitist institution, increasingly out of step with the democratic ethos of the Pentekontaeteia.[40] It is notable that *kalos*-names largely disappear from cups after the Persian wars. Immerwahr draws this conclusion: "The scarcity of *kalos*-names indicates that the cup is no longer central in the erotic life of the young; the subjects are no longer centred on banquet and komos."[41] Perhaps it is not so much erotic life that has moved elsewhere;

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[39] Hurwit (1990: 196; also 188-89).

[40] For one example, see the class-conscious debate between Philokleon and his son in the *Wasps* as the latter tries to persuade his more democratic father to join in the life of the symposion.

[41] Immerwahr (1990: 104).

rather, in the democratic city the symposion ceases to be the primary venue for the competition for *kleos*.

Let me be very clear here: I am not attempting to deny that *kalos*-inscriptions have their origin in pederastic courtship.[42] What I am suggesting is that the degree of their *proliferation* on late archaic vases exceeds anything we can plausibly ascribe to a simple desire of an *erastes* to communicate with an *eromenos*. Moreover, their placement on vases demands that they, like other inscriptions, be read out by those using them, especially in the symposion. They are thus not just a *representation* of speech: they are part of the *creation* of what I will term the culture of fame. By putting words before the eyes of symposiasts and others who will pronounce them out loud and discuss them, the vase functions as a ventriloquist: it puts the name of the honorand in the *kalos*-inscription into circulation, literally places him on the lips of a wider public.

Fame is the result: is fame the intention? Let me indulge in an even bolder speculation. Could the creation of fame, the stimulation of discussion of an individual be orchestrated? We have evidence for the deliberate creation of the culture of infamy: hoards of prepared ostraka from the fifth century, found in the Kerameikos and elsewhere, bear witness to orchestrated campaigns to remove certain individuals from the political life of Athens.[43] Could *kalos*-inscriptions represent the positive counterpart to ostracism: an attempt to create good will and admiration, particularly among the city's elite as gathered in symposia, for the rising scions of politically ambitious and prominent families at the end of the archaic period?[44] Of course I do not suggest that this is the case for all *kalos*-inscriptions, but a deliberate campaign to spread the

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42 Indeed, the existence of an increasing group of inscriptions that read simply HO ΠΑΙΣ ΚΑΛΟΣ probably catered to individuals (perhaps now of more modest circumstances) trying to inscribe themselves into such a discourse: a buyer without the time or forethought to commission a vase from a painter with the individual name of his beloved could still buy a vase with a generic sentiment and attempt, in the circumstances of the use of the vase, to incorporate the inscription into his discourse.

43 One such hoard, with 191 ostraka naming Themistokles, were found in a well on the north slope of the Akropolis: see Lang (1990: 142-58); these were originally published by Broneer (1938: 212-52). Another hoard, with 760 ostraka naming Kallias, son of Kratios, found in the Kerameikos in 1966 is reported in *BCH* 92 (1968) 732; cf. Shapiro (1982) and Vanderpool (1973: 235-36).

44 Shapiro (1982) uses the epigraphical evidence of both *kalos*-inscriptions and ostraka to identify a member of a prominent Athenian family, but he does not suggest the complementarity of function in the institutions I here propose.

name of a member of a patron's family might well explain the association of certain *kalos*-names with whole workshops of vase painters. In Leagros, so widely praised on vases of the last decade of the 6th century,[45] we might have proof of the success of just such a campaign to create the culture of fame: he eventually served as general in 465/4, although first he had to survive at least some effort to ostracise him.[46]

Times change, as do the means of access to fame. In the more radical democracy of the 5th century, it mattered less whom the audience of the symposion thought *kalos* and more what the man in the street thought. *Kalos*-inscriptions decline on vases, but if the casual tone of the jokes in Aristophanes is any guide, *kalos*-graffiti may have proliferated in public places, where marginally literate ordinary citizens might be induced to read out and debate their propositions.[47]

Just before the end of *kalos*-inscriptions on Attic vases, in the period 470-440, a curious variation appears. These inscriptions include the patronymic and are written in stoichedon; they emerge from the workshops of the Achilles Painter and his circle, mostly on lekythoi. One example is a white-ground lekythos of the Achilles Painter, now in the National

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45 Perhaps considerably more than a decade (see *ABV* 669 and *ARV*² 1591-94, with well over 50 *kalos*-inscriptions altogether); Dover (1978: 119) suggests he had become 'proverbial' for beauty. Francis and Vickers (1981) attempt to redate Leagros's birth to c. 495 and his period as *kalos* therefore to the decade 480-470 as part of their larger project of redating the whole Attic pottery sequence. Much, though not all, of their argument turns first on identifying the statue of a youth on the tondo a cup of the Kiss Painter (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins B5: *ARV*² 177.3; *Para.* 339; *Add.*² 185) as Leagros, through the *kalos*-inscription around the edge, and then identifying the depicted statue with a statue base found in the Agora, inscribed [Λ]ΕΑΓΡΟΣ ΑΝΕΘΕΚΕΝ ΓΛΑΥΚΟΝΟΣ ΔΟΔΕΚΑ ΘΕΟΙΣΙΝ (IG I³ 951). The *kalos*-inscription on the Kiss Painter's cup is not even a so-called 'tag-*kalos*,' and there is no compelling reason to identify Leagros as either the statue or the bearded spectator contemplating it. In support of the traditional dating of Attic pottery, see now the splendidly documented study of Shear (1993).

46 The Kerameikos excavations have also produced 53 ostraka naming Leagros: see Willemsen (1968: 29). The context links Leagros's name with those of Megakles, Themistokles, and Kimon. Despite the claims of Francis and Vickers (1981: 99-101 [with further references]), Leagros seems a likelier candidate for attempted ostracism in his forties or fifties, rather than in his twenties, as their chronology would require. It seems his son Glaucon thought his heritage worth advertising: at least two lekythoi inscribed ΓΛΑΥΚΟΝ ΚΑΛΟΣ ΛΕΑΓΡΟ survive. On this type of vase, see below and n. 50.

47 Such public graffiti would have had a sharply different dynamic from graffiti in a more private context. Talcott (1936) records a group of incised *kalos*-graffiti (all on plain black glaze ware) found together in a well, which suggests that they were written as part of the social play at symposia in the 470s and 460s. They include separate inscriptions labelling one Alkaios as both *kalos* and *katapugon* (a kind of inscription that never turns up painted onto a vase before firing). Here we can be relatively sure that the hands that inscribed these words were their 'authors' as well.

Gallery of Victoria, inscribed to Dromippus, son of Dromokleides [plate 16].[48] As Alan Shapiro has argued, they imitate the style of public inscriptions on stone; in the charged atmosphere leading up to the passage of the Periklean citizenship legislation, these vases make use of *kalos*-inscriptions (and the formality of the stoichedon style[49]) to assert the pure Athenian heritage of their honorands.[50] This new variation a decade or two before their final disappearance confirms the role of *kalos*-inscriptions as public display for a wider audience and contributors to an ongoing discourse about status and political participation in the city. That the experiment is so short-lived, however, suggests that by this late period the debate is inexorably moving on to other venues.

To conclude: *kalos*-inscriptions must be interpreted not just, and often not even primarily, as a communication between a sender and a recipient but as a practice carried on with full recognition of a wider audience. Writer and reader alike knew others were watching. Ultimately *kalos*-inscriptions cannot be reduced to a single practice: as K. J. Dover has observed, "no single and simple explanation ... will account for all the data."[51] Doubtless they began as acts of communication and even seduction,[52] and some probably retain this function.[53] But the effect, intended or not, of a proliferation of *kalos*-inscriptions naming a few individuals was the creation of a contemporary culture of fame around those individuals. *Kalos*-inscriptions fade from vases a few years before Aristophanes, but the competition for fame they represent was doubtless

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48 Melbourne D93/ 1971 (*Add.*^{2} 394), first published by Trendall (1973). Alan Shapiro tells me that this example came to his attention just as his article listing such vases (Shapiro [1987]) was in press, and so I cite it here as an addition to his list.

49 Style is certainly part of the message. It is intriguing therefore to see the use of the stoichedon style on an ostrakon directed at Kallias, probably in the ostracism of 485 BC: see Shapiro (1982: 71 and the drawing at plate 25b).

50 Shapiro (1987). The survival of 12 lekythoi (all by the Achilles Painter) honouring Diphilos son of Melanopos alone suggests that these vases too were not just gifts to the honorand, but intended for wider circulation. Trendall (1973: 7) in passing makes the point that *kalos*-inscriptions on white ground lekythoi "do not appear when the actual tomb is represented." The Achilles Painter also uses the stoichedon style for *kalos*-inscriptions without the patronymic: e.g. a white-ground lekythos in the British Museum (London 1874.11.10.1 [formerly D48: *ARV*^{2} 997.148; *Add.*^{2} 312]) inscribed ΗΥΓΙΑΙΝΟΝ ΚΑΛΟΣ.

51 Dover (1978: 121).

52 See Havelock (1976-77: 379) for an imaginative reconstruction of such scenes.

53 See above, n. 42, on inscriptions that read simply ΗΟ ΠΑΙΣ ΚΑΛΟΣ.

carried on by other means, even in the radicalised and ever more literate democracy.[54]

[54] I am grateful to audiences in Durban, New York, and Oxford for salutary discussion and to Anne Mackay, R.R.R. Smith, and an anonymous referee for comments aimed at improving the written version. I owe a particular debt to Alan Shapiro for much help as I began work on this topic. I thank François Lissarague most warmly for permission to reproduce his splendid drawings of figures 1-7 from his book, Lissarague (1990), and Margaret Legge at the National Gallery of Victoria for her help with the photograph of the Melbourne lekythos.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ORALITY OF GREEK ORATORY

Michael Gagarin

Most work on orality in ancient Greece has until now been concerned with poetry, especially the epic poetry of Homer, which was largely composed, performed and transmitted orally.[1] Much less attention has been paid to prose, which was often performed orally even if it may have been composed and transmitted with the aid of writing. Recently scholars have begun to consider the impact of writing on philosophical,[2] historical[3] and medical texts,[4] but little has yet been done on oratory.[5] Thomas Cole's controversial book on the origins of rhetoric[6] has some interesting (if speculative) implications for our understanding of oral elements in oratory but these are not developed; similarly, Swearingen and Poulakos[7] open up new and interesting perspectives on oratory but both tend to concentrate on theoretical issues only distantly related to orality. And yet, whatever the role of writing, most oratory was orally performed.[8] Since Parry, oral theory has primarily focused on composi-

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[1] For these three different aspects of orality, see Finnegan (1992: 17).

[2] Havelock (1983) has argued that early philosophical prose, notably the fragments of Herakleitos, show oral features. In response Ferrari (1984) has rejected style as a good indicator of an author's medium, objecting that Herakleitos' prose does not exhibit the most characteristic oral feature of epic, formulaic expression (see below). More recently, O'Sullivan (1996) has noted a tension between spoken and written elements in the sophists, exemplified by Gorgias on the one hand and Protagoras and Prodikos on the other.

[3] Gentili and Cerri (1978); Edmunds (1993).

[4] Pigeaud (1988).

[5] See Havelock (1986: 46-47); Canfora (1988); Connors (1986).

[6] Cole (1991: esp. 71-83).

[7] Swearingen (1986); Poulakos (1995: 138).

[8] I believe the preserved texts are fairly close to the speeches actually delivered in court (or at least to the version written by the logographer for oral delivery); Worthington has recently argued (1996) that the surviving texts were revised for publication, but his theory of extensive ring-composition in the speeches seems to me untenable (cf. MacDowell 1994: 270). Unlike deliberative speeches, which were rarely written, and forensic speeches, which were written for clients to deliver but were otherwise not widely circulated, epideictic oratory "was closely associated both with writing and with publication" (Trevett [1996: 377]); cf. Dover (1974: 9-10).

tion; hence the emphasis on formulas. But performance is now drawing the attention of oralists,[9] and by focusing on performance (or communication) we can ignore features of oral style that relate only to composition (such as formulas).[10]

The following remarks are a first attempt to analyse the orality of oratory. It will be argued that there are clear differences between oratory written to be read and oratory written to be performed orally and that these differences are related to oral performance. Works from the second half of the fifth century will be examined, specifically those of Gorgias, the most noted sophistic orator, and Antiphon, the originator of forensic logography. Almost all the preserved oratory from this period is forensic, and the larger context for this paper is the oral and agonistic nature of Athenian law, and ultimately of Greek law, where, I will suggest, oral debate and argument play a much larger role than in other comparable legal systems. After (1) preliminary remarks on fifth-century oratory, I will (2) use Gorgias' *Helen* and Antiphon's *Second Tetralogy* to illustrate specific features of oral and written styles, and will then (3) examine Antiphon's court speeches and finally conclude (4) with some observations on orality and Athenian law.

1. Oratory in Fifth-Century Greece

As the poems of Homer and Hesiod indicate, oratory played an important role in Greek culture from the beginning. Before the second half of the fifth century oratory was entirely oral—composed and performed *ex tempore*, and not preserved except for the occasional memorable phrase (Perikles called Aigina "the eyesore of the Peiraieus") or the fictional versions of poets and historians.[11] The earliest speeches to be written were composed by sophists and logographers. The former may have used writing to convey their works to a wider audience, but there is little doubt that Gorgias' surviving orations, at least, were intended primarily

[9] See, e.g., Foley (1995) and (1998); Finnegan (1992: esp. 17-24, 28-29, 133).

[10] The absence of formulae in Herakleitos (see above n. 2) is irrelevant if Herakleitos composed his maxims in writing with a view to oral communication. Similarly, Ferrari's argument (1984: 197) that allegedly oral features of early philosophical style are also features of continuous argument in the orators, especially Gorgias, whose speeches "were often carefully scripted", ignores the possibility that, as will be argued below, Gorgias may have taken pains to write in a style suitable for oral presentation.

[11] For references and further discussion see Gagarin (1997a: 4).

for oral performance.[12] The logographers, beginning with Antiphon, wrote speeches for others to memorise and deliver in court, where litigants had to present their own cases to the jurors. Thus, all these speeches were composed in writing for oral performance. In addition, a smaller number were composed in writing primarily for a reading audience.[13] In this category, I will argue, belong the *Tetralogies* of Antiphon[14]—imaginary court speeches illustrating certain forensic arguments—as well as the speeches of Thucydides.[15] In what follows 'oral style' will refer to the style of a speech intended primarily for oral performance (whatever its mode of composition), as opposed to the 'written style' of speeches intended for reading.

Before looking at specific examples of each, we should first note the Greeks' own characterisation of the two styles—in Aristotle's terms (*Rhetoric* 3.12), the *graphikê lexis* and the *agonistikê lexis*. Aristotle characterises written style as *akribestatê*, or "most precise", and agonistic style (style appropriate to an oral debate in an *agôn*) as *hypokritikotatê*, or "most aimed at delivery" (3.12.2).[16] This characterisation resembles the earlier analysis in Alkidamas' treatise, *On Those Who Write Written Speeches, or On the Sophists*, usually dated around 390.[17] This work, purporting to criticise written speeches and praise extemporane-

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[12] It was in an oral performance that Gorgias impressed the Athenians in 427 BC by "the strangeness of his style" (τῷ ξενίζοντι τῆς λέξεως, Diod. Sic. 12.53.3), a style clearly intended for oral performance. Cole (1991: 71-73) argues that prose like that of Gorgias' funeral oration is too harsh, stiff and kakophonic to be intended for oral presentation, and was thus composed for reading and study. But this aesthetic judgment misreads the experimental nature of Gorgias' work, which was intended to shock as much as, if not more than, to please.

[13] It is possible, of course, that a speech intended primarily for oral performance will also be read or that speeches intended to be read will sometimes be performed orally; but the distinction between primarily oral and primarily written communication still holds (cf. O'Sullivan [1996]).

[14] I accept the authenticity of the *Tetralogies* (see Gagarin [1997a: 8-9]), though this issue is not crucial to this part of my argument.

[15] In contrasting his "possession for all time" with "competition pieces for an immediate hearing" (1.22), Thucydides is differentiating his work, which will be read and studied by later generations, with that of Herodotos and others, which was performed before being published. Johnson's arguments (1994) against oral performance by Herodotos apply only to the work as a whole as we have it, but Herodotos may have performed many parts of his work orally before committing the whole to writing; see further Thomas (1993). For Thucydides and writing, see Edmunds (1993).

[16] Aristotle notes that asyndeton and repetition are suitable in oral presentation but not in a written text.

[17] See Avezzù (1982: 71-72); Cole (1991: 173 n. 4) wants to date the work to the 360s.

ous speech, is mainly concerned with the composition of speeches, but Alkidamas notes that a speech's performance also influences its style (13): "Those who write speeches for the courts avoid precision (*akribeia*) and imitate instead the style of extemporaneous speakers; and their writing appears finest when they produce speeches that are least like written texts."[18] In other words, forensic oratory is intended for oral presentation and thus imitates the style of an extemporaneous performance. And as in Aristotle, a significant feature of oral style is its lack of precision.[19]

Alkidamas uses *akribeia* of written prose (13, 14, 16, 18, 20, 23, 25, 33, 34; cf. 12), though for him the advantage brought by the precision of writing is outweighed by the possibility of adapting one's words to the moment (*kairos*) in an extemporaneous oral performance. Quite the opposite holds for Thucydides, who writes (1.22) of the difficulty of remembering the precise wording (τὴν ἀκρίβειαν αὐτὴν) of speeches and of his efforts to report events (*erga*) with as much precision as possible (ὅσον δυνατὸν ἀκριβείᾳ ἐπεξελθών).[20] Clearly precision is an important goal for his written style.

Antiphon also notes the *akribeia* of arguments in the *Second Tetralogy*, where the defendant begins by apologising to the jurors if his speech seems too precise or subtle.[21] Although the reader's initial reaction, like the plaintiff's, might be that the facts are obvious and the case needs no further argument, the defendant's case is highly complex and requires a precise statement of his reasoning. This precision is the distinctive feature of written communication, and Antiphon expected his

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[18] οἱ γὰρ εἰς τὰ δικαστήρια τοὺς λόγους γράφοντες φεύγουσι τὰς ἀκριβείας καὶ μιμοῦνται τὰς τῶν αὐτοσχεδιαζόντων ἑρμηνείας, καὶ τότε κάλλιστα γράφειν δοκοῦσιν, ὅταν ἥκιστα γεγραμμένοις ὁμοίους πορίσωνται λόγους.

[19] Alkidamas also notes that the written style is produced by constant revision (4) and pays more attention to details and rhythm (16). He is less concerned with speeches intended for reading, but he refers to books several times (1, 15, 28) and speaks of his own written work as (he hopes) his memorial (μνημεῖα). O'Sullivan (1996: 123) reads Alkidamas to mean that oratory is "more concerned with emotional impact than with conveying the truth," but when Alkidamas mentions truth (12, 28) it is associated with oral performance as opposed to writing.

[20] See Trédé (1983).

[21] 3.2.2; cf. 3.3.3, 3.4.2; in each case the adjective pertains to a speaker's words. In Antiphon's court speeches (5.26, 5.86, 6.14; cf. 3.2.1, 4.3.1), and in forensic oratory in general, *akribeia* is usually used of the facts (*pragmata*). For parallels between expressions for truth, evidence, etc. (including *akribeia*) in Thucydides and the orators, especially Antiphon, see Siewert (1985). For *akribeia* as subtlety of argument in Thucydides 1.22 see Bers (1997: 221 with n. 9). Crane's lengthy discussion (1997: esp. 50-73) virtually ignores this sense.

readers to be able to ponder the subtleties of the argument. Gorgias, on the other hand, in his funeral oration puts the correctness (*orthotês*) of speech above the *akribeia* of law. Preferring the adaptability of an oral performance to the strict letter of written law, he composes his speeches in a style that will be most effective in this medium.

In the next section I shall examine in some detail Gorgias' *Helen* and the defendant's first speech in Antiphon's *Second Tetralogy*.[22] These two speeches have been chosen because the legal issue is essentially the same in both. The accuser (in Gorgias' case the poets, who have traditionally condemned Helen) has a strong *prima facie* case; in response, the defendant accepts the facts as presented but argues that, correctly understood, these exonerate the defendant.[23] Gorgias does not challenge the traditional story, as others had,[24] that Helen went to Troy with Paris, but argues that even granting these facts, Helen is not to blame. Antiphon's defendant similarly accepts the accusation (3.1.1), that his son threw a javelin and that this javelin hit and killed the prosecutor's son (a young boy who was helping collect the javelins), but he argues that his son is blameless since the boy was at fault for running onto the field at the wrong time. Both defendants seek to transfer the blame from the accused to someone or something else by raising the issue of cause and effect: both admit that the accused is one link in a causal chain but argue that someone or something else is the primary cause. Thus, although Gorgias suggests four different possibilities for blame and Antiphon only one, both speakers have essentially the same strategy.[25] These similarities of argument suggest that any stylistic differences may stem from the different mode of communication envisioned for each speech.

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22 The relative dating of these two works is not important here. The *Tetralogies* are often dated to the 430s or even 440s; the surviving speeches of Gorgias probably date to the last third of the fifth century. The argument in *Helen* has some similarity to arguments in Euripides' *Trojan Women* (914-65, performed in 415), but it is not clear which work, if either, influenced the other.

23 Both defendants could be said to "make the weaker argument stronger."

24 Stesichoros, Herodotos and Euripides' *Helen* all present versions in which Helen does not go to Troy. Besides Gorgias the earliest argument for Helen's innocence that accepts the traditional story is in the *Trojan Women*.

25 In terms of later rhetorical theory both speakers present a *status qualitativus*, or argument about the legal interpretation of certain facts, rather than a *status coniecturalis*, or dispute about the facts themselves (Cole [1991: 76]). Examples of the latter are Gorgias' *Palamedes* and Antiphon's *First Tetralogy*.

2. Oral and Written Styles in Oratory

Among the features of oral style we can identify in *Helen* are signposts, ring-composition, parallelism, parataxis, relatively simplified sentence structure, and, of course, the notorious 'Gorgianic' verbal effects. Antiphon, by contrast, builds his argument largely without these features: he does not alert the reader where he is going, and he uses a more complex syntax, heavily dependent on participles, with very little verbal assonance.[26] Gorgias and Antiphon also differ in their methods of argument.[27] Antiphon presents a radically new argument supported by generalisation and analysis, whereas Gorgias' basic argument is less innovative and he avoids analysis or generalisation even when it suggests itself. As Havelock has argued,[28] oral performance does not encourage generalisation or analysis.

(i) Signposts: Gorgias, like many public speakers, provides markers to help the audience follow his argument: e.g. (5) "Now that my speech has passed over the past, it is to the beginning of my future speech that I proceed"; (9) "Now, let me move from one argument to another"; (15) "The fourth reason, I discuss in my fourth argument." Antiphon's defendant, by contrast, does not indicate where the argument is going or where it has been; his arguments are taken up in the same order in the next two speeches, which might be convenient for a reader, who could refer back, but would probably not help an audience hearing the speeches.

(ii) Ring-composition: Gorgias states four possible reasons for Helen's behaviour (6), considers each possibility in turn (6, 7, 8-14, 15-19), and concludes (20) that Helen escapes blame in each case. The conclusion lists the possibilities in reverse order from their earlier order.[29] Such an arrangement (A-B-C-D . . . D-C-B-A) is well

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26 As often noted, Antiphon is close to Thucydides in this regard.

27 In an earlier version of this paper I used the standard dichotomy between style and content but now find it of limited help, since the two areas so often overlap. Repetition, for example, is a feature of style but also a form of argument and can be an important part of a speaker's rhetorical strategy (see below on Antiphon 6). And antithesis is often a feature of both style and argument.

28 Havelock (1963: 181-82).

29 (6) "Either she did what she did because of the will of fortune and the plan of the gods and the decree of necessity, or she was seized by force, or persuaded by words, <or captured by love>." (20) "Whether she did what she did, invaded by love, persuaded by speech, impelled by force or compelled by divine necessity, she escapes all blame entirely."

established in oral poetry. By contrast, Antiphon's more complex argument (3-9) progresses point by point, and his final summary (10) does not return to the beginning, as the following paraphrase shows:

> (3) My son did not kill anyone. (4) If his javelin throw had gone astray and hit a bystander, he would be guilty, but it did not, so the boy's death was caused by his own running under the javelin, not by the javelin thrower. (5) If the boy had stood still, he would not have been hit. (6) The killing was unintentional, so the blame falls on the one who made a mistake. (7) The thrower did not make a mistake (8) but the boy did and so he is to blame. (9) The law prohibiting just and unjust homicide also acquits my son. (10) "Since we are thus acquitted by the truth of the actions and by the law under which they prosecute . . ."

(iii) Parallelism and paratactic style: whether or not parallelism is an essential feature of oral literature,[30] parallel constructions and paratactic style are certainly easier to follow. Gorgias favours simple sentence-structures that are expanded with parallel expressions and paratactic coordinate or subordinate clauses. Antiphon has much more subordination in his syntax, and his use of adverbial participles for subordination is sometimes so concentrated that it threatens to obscure the sense. Examples are plentiful, e.g., the short protasis (5): ὁ δὲ παῖς εἴπερ ἑστὼς φανερὸς ὑμῖν ἐστι μὴ βληθείς: literally, "the boy, if standing still (it) is clear to you that he was not hit"; i.e., "if it is clear to you that the boy was not hit standing still." When Antiphon does use parallel expressions, he often (like Thucydides) uses variation to break up the parallelism.[31]

(iv) Antithesis: Gorgias and Antiphon use antithesis in significantly different ways. Gorgias' antitheses are frequent but brief, usually consisting of only a few words or a short clause in each member: (3) "Clearly her mother was Leda and her father in fact a god, but in story a mortal, Zeus and Tyndareos. One was thought to be her father because he was, the other was reported to be because he said he was; etc." Moreover, Gorgias employs only one general antithesis, that between

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[30] See Finnegan (1992: 128-30). For links between writing and more complex syntax in English, see Beaman (1984). She concludes that the traditional view that writing uses more complex syntax than speech is oversimplified and that written narratives use different sorts of complex syntax from oral narratives. Her conclusions are derived from spur-of-the-moment narratives and are probably not directly applicable to the more carefully composed Greek material, but they should nonetheless serve as a caution against *prima facie* assumptions in this matter.

[31] For examples see Gagarin (1997a: 30-31).

blameless Helen and another force or person who is guilty. This traditional antithesis between guilt and innocence, criminal and victim, is found in almost all defense speeches and indeed can hardly be avoided. By contrast, Antiphon's antitheses are longer, include more complex ideas, and are sometimes combined into complex clusters: (4) "Now, if the javelin had hit and wounded the boy because it carried outside the boundaries of its proper course, then we would have no argument (*logos*) against the charge of homicide; but because the boy ran under the trajectory of the javelin and placed himself in its path, one of them was prevented from hitting its target whereas the other was hit because he ran under the javelin." In a single sentence the speaker contrasts not only the youth's conduct with the boy's but also what each one of them did with what he might have done.

(v) Word order: another aspect of Antiphon's more complex style is his penchant for extreme hyperbaton, loosely defined as the violation of normal word order. As in Thucydides, the result is sometimes nearly incomprehensible; e.g. (9): ἀπολύει δὲ καὶ ὁ νόμος ἡμᾶς, ᾧ πιστεύων, εἴργοντι μήτε ἀδίκως μήτε δικαίως ἀποκτείνειν, ὡς φονέα με διώκει (lit. "The law also absolves us, relying on which—[the law] prohibiting unjustly or justly killing—he prosecutes me as a murderer"). Gorgias, on the other hand, favours mild forms of hyperbaton that are common in Greek, and postpones the main verb only when its presence is clearly predictable. An extreme example in *Helen* is (7) ἄξιος οὖν ὁ μὲν ἐπιχειρήσας βάρβαρος βάρβαρον ἐπιχείρημα καὶ λόγῳ καὶ νόμῳ καὶ ἔργῳ λόγῳ μὲν αἰτίας, νόμῳ δὲ ἀτιμίας, ἔργῳ δὲ ζημίας τυχεῖν: "Thus, the barbarian who undertook a deed barbarous in word and law and fact deserves to meet with blame in word, loss of rights in law, and punishment in fact." Even though the infinitive (*tychein*) completing the sense of *axios*, the first word, comes at the end, the three genitives dependent on *tychein* have already been understood because they could be construed with the initial *axios* with little difference in meaning.

(vi) Sentence length: this is a perhaps of less significance by itself, but it is consistent with the other features we have noted that in these speeches Antiphon's sentences have on average 30% more words (35.9

words per sentence, in comparison with Gorgias' 27.8), which allows for, though it does not require, greater syntactical complexity.[32]

(vii) Verbal effects: we need not catalogue Gorgias' notorious verbal effects, which Antiphon (like Thucydides) generally avoids. These surely were developed in an oral context and presume an oral performance. Many may seem to exist for their own sake simply to draw attention, but they can also reinforce other stylistic features and help make clear the syntactic structure of a sentence, as can be seen from, e.g., the list of the four likely causes in 20: εἴτ' ἐρασθεῖσα εἴτε λόγῳ πεισθεῖσα εἴτε βίᾳ ἁρπασθεῖσα εἴτε ὑπὸ θείας ἀνάγκης ἀναγκασθεῖσα ἔπραξεν ἃ ἔπραξε (whether she did what she did, invaded by love, persuaded by speech, impelled by force or compelled by divine necessity). Antiphon uses such verbal effects very sparingly. Only once in the defendant's argument do we find an expression that could be called Gorgianic (8): οὐ συνηδομένων μὲν οὐδὲ συνεθελόντων ἡμῶν, συναλγούντων δὲ καὶ συλλυπουμένων (we do not enjoy it or desire it, but we share his pain and share his suffering). These genitive absolutes have no significance for the argument but seem inserted as a diversion; they signal an emotional note otherwise absent from the main body of the speech, though present in the proem and epilogue.

Although some of these stylistic differences may be more a matter of degree than kind, taken together they form a clear contrast between clarity and simplicity on the one hand and complexity, even obscurity, on the other. Other differences characterise the speakers' methods of argument. Antiphon's argument includes three features not found, or found to a lesser degree, in Gorgias: innovation, analysis, and generalisation.

(viii) Innovation: oral cultures tend to preserve traditional ways of thinking as well as traditional forms of expression. In arguing that X is to blame for something that on the surface appears to have been done by Y, Gorgias echoes an argument common in Homer, notably in Agamemnon's apology, where he says (*Il.* 19.86-87) "I am not to blame (*aitios*) but Zeus and Fate and the Fury who walks in darkness." Penelope uses the same argument about Helen, who would not have slept with Paris if she had known the consequences, "but a god induced

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32 I have used the Teubner texts and the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* word-counts for sentence divisions for both authors.

her to do the shameful deed" (*Od.* 23.222). And Nestor suggests that the gods were responsible for Klytemnestra's adultery (*Od.* 3.269-70).[33] Gorgias expands this traditional blaming of gods to blaming other humans and other forces, but each argument takes the same form: since X caused Helen to act, she is not to blame, where X is in turn a god, a human (Paris), speech (*logos*), and love (*eros*). Gorgias does cite parallels suggesting how powerful *logos* and *eros* might be, but he does not attempt to explain why their being powerful should exonerate Helen.[34] He does break new ground by expanding the traditional argument in new and undoubtedly controversial ways, but he does not provide new arguments in support of these innovative claims; for all his bold novelty, in some respects he remains firmly in the Homeric tradition.

Antiphon's case, by contrast, is fundamentally novel; there is no precedent for absolving the apparent agent of an accidental death by blaming the victim. The novelty is confirmed by the brevity and confidence of the plaintiff's first speech; he cannot imagine anyone contesting the case. And, as noted, the defendant preemptively apologizes for the subtlety of his argument about matters "whose *akribeia* I can hardly understand."

(ix) Analysis: Gorgias does not analyse[35] his argument beyond the point that if X is to blame, Y is not, which he repeats for each case. The discussions of *logos* and *eros* are largely occupied with examples of ways in which these and other emotions affect human behaviour. The psychological analysis of perception and emotion (16-18) is interesting and novel in itself and lends a scientific aura to the argument, but it does not form an integral part of it. Antiphon, on the other hand, states his thesis that the thrower is innocent, and then supports it with an analysis of cause and responsibility, beginning with a hypothetical antithesis about the thrower (if his throw had gone astray, he would be guilty) followed by a similar analysis of the boy's action. To our knowledge, Antiphon was the first to use this kind of antithesis, whereby one can

[33] All three examples, of course, raise many further issues of blame and responsibility, but the basic form of argument is, not X but a god.

[34] Both are traditionally seen as powerful forces, and *eros*, at least, is often portrayed in lyric poetry as beyond one's control, but even when Sappho says (apparently) that love led Helen astray (16.11), she does not appear to absolve her on this account.

[35] By this I mean he does not break down this argument into smaller component steps to help explain how he reaches a conclusion.

distinguish between acts or situations that are nearly similar but have different legal consequences. This innovation sets the stage for the arguments about cause and responsibility in later philosophers.[36]

(x) Generalisation: Antiphon also generalises his arguments from this particular case to all unintentional acts (3.2.6): "since both sides agree the killing was unintentional, the killer can be determined even more clearly by establishing to whom the error (*hamartia*) belongs. Those who through a *hamartia* fail to accomplish what they have in mind to do are the agents of unintentional acts, and those who do or experience anything unintentional are responsible for their sufferings."[37] He then applies this generalisation, that the person who made a mistake is legally responsible for an unintentional act, to the present case.[38] In contrast, although Gorgias could easily generalise his arguments by claiming that whoever is compelled to act by a stronger person or force is not to blame, he never explicitly formulates this principle.

We have seen that these two speeches display numerous differences in style and form of argument that can plausibly be related to the change from oral performance to written communication.[39] Conclusive proof of a direct connection between mode of communication and style or form of argument may be impossible, but it seems very likely that there was a connection and that the expansion of writing as a mode of communication in the late fifth century significantly influenced the intellectual activity of the period.

3. The Orality of Antiphon's Court Speeches

One might object that since any two authors naturally differ in style, there is no reason to look elsewhere for an explanation of the differences we have noted. On this view the speeches of Antiphon written for oral

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36 E.g. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 3.1-5.

37 For questions about the text see Gagarin (1997a: *ad loc*).

38 The argument from generalisation to particular cases is common in Antiphon and also in Thucydides. Dover (1971: xii) suggests that it "was no doubt characteristic of late-fifth-century Athens."

39 Cf. Dover (1974: 10): "it is remarkable how often, when in our reading of the orators a passage strikes us as sophisticated, intellectual, artificial or otherwise unusual, the speech in question turns out to belong to one or other of the special categories." These "special categories" (listed on pages 8-9, where there is some damage to Dover's text) consist of works not composed for presentation in court, such as epideictic oratory (cf. above n. 8).

performance in court would resemble the *Second Tetralogy* more than *Helen*.[40] To answer this objection we need to examine Antiphon's court speeches. Do they, as Alkidamas puts it, "avoid precision of expression and imitate instead the style of extemporaneous speakers"? We shall see that although these speeches lack some of the striking stylistic features of *Helen*, the nature of their arguments is closer to that speech than to the *Tetralogy*.[41]

I have elsewhere surveyed features of Antiphon's language and style,[42] noting that many features are shared by the court speeches and the *Tetralogies*, but that there are also significant differences particularly in the greater syntactical complexity of the *Tetralogies*. In terms of the differences noted above between *Helen* and the *Second Tetralogy*, we may observe that the court speeches use more signposts than the *Tetralogies*,[43] tend to use more paratactic style and more normal word order, and have somewhat shorter sentences, averaging 30.8 words per sentence vs. 35.9 (27.8 for *Helen*) . But although the court speeches display some of the same stylistic differences from the *Tetralogies* as *Helen*, the difference is not as great. More striking is the difference between the arguments of the court speeches and the *Tetralogies*. Here I shall look only at two speeches, 1 and 6, for these two are similar to the *Second Tetralogy* in that they raise issues of intent and responsibility in situations where there appears to be little disagreement over the basic facts.[44]

The main argument of 6, a defense speech, comes in 1-32.[45] The speaker was serving as a choregos, or chorus producer, and while the

40 This presumes that Antiphon is the author of the *Tetralogies*; see above n. 14.

41 Similarly, I would argue from the very different style of Gorgias' *On Not Being* (in the two surviving summaries of that treatise) that this work was intended for a reading audience (see Gagarin [1997b: 38-40]). However, the absence of the original text makes any such conclusion hazardous.

42 Gagarin (1997a: 24-34); differences between the court speeches and the *Tetralogies* are treated at 32-34. The stylistic differences between the *Tetralogies* and the courtroom speeches noted by Dover (1950) involve features like vocabulary and the use of particles that are not necessarily relevant to the question of oral *vs*. written communication.

43 To take just one example, πρῶτον (first) occurs four times in the *Tetralogies vs*. 19 times in the court speeches (mostly in 5 and 6); on five of these occurrences it is followed by ἔπειτα (next) and once by δεύτερον (second), always in the court speeches (which have about 1.7 times as many words as the *Tetralogies*). Moreover, ἔπειτα (next) occurs 14 more times not immediately preceded by πρῶτον, again, always in the court speeches.

44 Antiphon 5 disputes the facts of the case in ways similar to the *First Tetralogy*.

45 The rest of the speech (33-51) introduces issues not paralleled in the *Second Tetralogy*.

chorus boys were being trained at his house, one of them died after being given a drink—perhaps something intended to cure a sore throat. Apparently the death was accidental and the choregos was not present at the time, but he is accused of unintentional homicide nonetheless. His plea includes narrative accounts of his arrangements for the boys' supervision and training (11-14) and of events right after the boy's death (20-22), strong denials of involvement with the death (15-19) and an extended discussion of the evidence of free men and slaves (23-32), but he devotes the largest part of the speech (33-50) to attacking the prosecution for bringing the case at the instigation of the choregos' political enemies rather than for legitimate reasons of grief and revenge. Thus the main argument denying the charge occupies a relatively small part of the speech (15-19) and the supporting arguments (23-32), as we shall see, are not directly aimed at what is, for us at least, the main issue.

At the heart of the direct argument is a series of repeated denials (15-17): "I did not order the boy to drink the drug, I did not force him to drink, I did not give him the drink, and I was not even present when he drank. . . . If they say it's a crime if someone orders, I did nothing wrong, for I gave no order. And if they say it's a crime if someone forces, I did nothing wrong, for I used no force. And if they say that whoever gives the drug is responsible, then I am not responsible, for I did not give anything." These denials may not be strictly relevant to the case, since the prosecution apparently did not accuse the speaker of any of these specific acts. Indeed, we never do learn precisely what act the speaker is accused of,[46] and he gives no positive information about his involvement in the events nor any indication what actions might have been considered blameworthy. This is a striking contrast to the *Second Tetralogy*, where the speaker takes pains to explain precisely what the youth did and did not do.

Instead of precision, the negative repetitions, which seem intended for oral performance,[47] produce a sense of imprecision. Several other features give the same impression. For instance, the choregos is accused of "planning the boy's death" (*bouleusas ton thanaton*, 16), as opposed

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[46] Probably the prosecution argued that as choregos he was responsible for everything that happened; similar ideas of responsibility are becoming more common, at least in the US.

[47] Cf. above n. 16.

to killing with his own hand, but there is no discussion or analysis of this charge and no indication what sorts of actions (if any) it might normally cover.[48] Scholars have been perplexed by this seemingly contradictory charge of planning an unintentional homicide, but it seems that Antiphon remains vague on this point, perhaps because he is writing a speech for oral delivery to a body of non-professional jurors. It is also quite possible that the prosecutor also gave little or no specific information about the charge. If, as the choregos claims, the prosecution's primary motive for bringing the case was to bar him from other suits against his enemies, it would not have mattered that the charge was vague or weakly supported. Instead of a precise argument about the law or the specific offence, the prosecutor may have attacked the choregos' political activity and the inadequacy of arrangements for training the boys, as evidenced by his absence during the training; emotional pleas for the helpless victim and his bereft family were undoubtedly included. Scholars may prefer the sort of precision of detail, analysis and generalisation we find in the *Tetralogies*, but in presenting his case orally in court this speaker, at least, seem to have had other concerns.

The speaker in Antiphon 1 accuses his stepmother of poisoning her husband; he alleges that she induced a serving woman to administer the poison by pretending it was a love potion that would also work on this servant's lover, who was her husband's dinner-guest that evening. Scholars generally assume that the case turns on the question of intent: the stepmother would argue that she thought the drug was a love potion and intended no harm, and the weakness of the speaker's case is that he has no good proof of his stepmother's intentions.[49] This reading seems confirmed by a report in the *Magna Moralia* (1.16.2), a later work attributed to Aristotle, which notes that a woman was acquitted of poisoning her husband because she thought the drug was a love potion and did not intend to kill him.

This analysis ignores the fundamentally oral nature of Athenian law and legal procedure. For Aristotle and later scholars the precise determination of intent is generally crucial, but it is clearly less important for the speaker of Antiphon 1 (and may not have been very important for

[48] See further Gagarin (1990).

[49] See, e.g., Gernet (1923: 33-36), who is tempted to think that there might be a lacuna in the text where arguments on this issue once existed.

the defense or the jurors either). The speaker could have analysed and generalised about intentional and unintentional acts if he had wished, but Antiphon's main strategy, designed to meet the needs of an oral performance, is to present a vivid narrative (14-20) together with repeated suggestions of family loyalty on one side and disloyalty on the other, reinforced by allusions to Klytemnestra, the husband-murderer *par excellence*. Women who give their husbands drugs are threatening whatever their intent, and the prosecutor's portrayal of the scheming woman may well have been more effective than any discussion of intent. And the most effective response may have been to put less emphasis on specific intent, while portraying the woman as a loyal if misguided wife, led astray by her great love for her husband, but acting primarily from respect for him, a sense of duty, and concern for the rest of the family.

The other main argument in Antiphon 1 is an appeal to the testimony of slaves to be taken under torture (5-13).[50] The speaker claims that if interrogated as he proposed, slaves would have confirmed that the stepmother had once before been accused of trying to poison her husband and on that occasion had said only that she thought she was giving him a love potion. We find a similar argument in 6, when the speaker claims that if interrogated, slaves would confirm the testimony of his free witnesses that he was not present at the boy's death. In both these cases (and virtually every other case) the challenge to interrogate (*basanos*) was refused and the interrogation never occurred. Nonetheless, each speaker stresses the importance of the slaves' presumed evidence and argues that his opponent's refusal to allow the interrogation amounts to obstruction of justice and an admission of guilt. In neither case, however, is the requested testimony central to the case. In 6 the speaker's absence during the boy's death was probably established by the free witnesses who testify (15); slave testimony would add nothing. In 1 the allegation, even if true, would not confirm the current accusation (though it does strengthen the character portrayal). Why then do both speakers make so much of the *basanos*? The answer is complex and depends on certain features of Athenian law.

[50] The testimony of slaves had to be taken under torture, which normally could only be administered if both sides agreed; see Gagarin (1996).

4. Oral and Written in Athenian Law

Aristotle classifies *basanos* with laws, contracts, oaths, and (free) witnesses as *atechnoi pisteis* (non-artistic proofs), since, he says, they are pre-existing and are just used by the speaker, not invented by him (*Rhetoric* 1.2.2, 1.15). In contrast, the *entechnoi* (artistic) *pisteis* are those he has to create himself: his arguments, his portrayal of character and his appeal to the audience (*logos*, *ethos*, *pathos*). In Aristotle's day *atechnoi pisteis* were written down and read to the court by a clerk, as the speaker paused in his speech, and Aristotle's idea that these *atechnoi pisteis* have an objective existence may be related to their being written. Even in Antiphon's day documents such as the text of a law were read in court, and witnesses may have written out their testimony beforehand and then read it to the court, providing a written counterpoint to the oral argument of the speaker.

Like Aristotle, Antiphon seems to have considered *atechnoi pisteis* more objective than other sorts of arguments,[51] and they play a significant role in most forensic speeches. Of course, as Aristotle himself makes clear and the speeches confirm, even these allegedly objective *atechnoi pisteis* can be manipulated by the speaker just like the *entechnoi pisteis*. Nonetheless, the *atechnoi pisteis* do add an element of objectivity to forensic oratory, for they provide a means for speakers in fact to introduce evidence to the court[52]—objective evidence that may be important even if it does not relate directly to the specific legal issues as we see them.

This brings us to a second point, that the issues being disputed in Athenian law are much broader than a question of whether a specific statute was violated, which is (in theory, at least) the focal point of litigation today. To be sure, the question of a specific violation is important in many cases, but Athenian litigation also assessed more broadly the behaviour and character of both litigants. In Antiphon 1 the jurors would

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[51] The *Tetralogies* generally avoid *atechnoi pisteis* and concentrate on arguments, adding *pathos* in the proems and epilogues. But in the *First Tetralogy* (2.4.8) the defendant introduces an alibi that, he claims, would be supported by his household servants, and he challenges his accusers to interrogate the servants under torture. The inclusion of *basanos* here seems intended to demonstrate that this factual evidence (*ergon*) will override any argument from likelihood (*eikos*).

[52] I have argued this with regard to *basanos* in Gagarin (1996). The challenger is unlikely to try to introduce clearly false evidence as the purported testimony of slaves, for in that case his challenge would probably be accepted.

judge the stepmother's actions as a whole, including not just the alleged violation but also her character, her adherence to accepted family values, and her past behaviour. Jurors would assess these actions using general community standards (in which gender prejudice undoubtedly figured) and would decide whether her behaviour was on balance acceptable or not. In 6 issues of responsibility and public interest are central to the case, as the jurors weigh the need for strict supervision of the chorus' training and the choregos' actions in response to that need against the benefit of bringing public offenders to justice and the choregos' accomplishments on this front. Both areas involve the public interest and the jurors are asked in essence to judge whether the choregos devoted too much attention to his prosecutions as opposed to the welfare of the chorus boys. From this perspective, specific details about giving the boy the drug are largely irrelevant.

These large issues, involving character, behaviour and social values, are never entirely subject to objective proof, though such proof is not irrelevant either. But more important for the litigant's argument on these issues is the rhetoric of oral pleading. The Athenian system provided for both a broad range of oral argument—narratives, emotional pleas, and arguments—and the periodic introduction of written objective evidence. Thus the court speeches, composed for oral performance, favour narrative, repetition, simplified arguments, and emotional appeals, punctuated by the evidence of written proofs, which despite the appearance of greater objectivity, remained subordinate to the rhetoric of the oral performance. The *Tetralogies*, on the other hand, composed for written communication, favour detailed analysis and structured argument and counter-argument; they were not intended to replicate actual strategies of forensic argument, but rather to demonstrate arguments on important issues.

For some this picture of forensic oratory may confirm Plato's view of rhetoric as merely a way to deceive one's audience. Modern thinking largely agrees that rhetoric should have no place in law.[53] But, as Havelock has argued, justice as an objective entity first arises in Greece in the written culture of Plato,[54] and in his *Laws* Plato proposes a judicial process completely at odds with Athenian practice at the time, one

[53] There are exceptions, like Stanley Fish, for whom all law is essentially rhetoric; see, e.g., some of the essays in Fish (1989).

[54] For "Justice as an Entity Which Is" in Plato see Havelock (1978: 312).

that relies on lengthy examination of the evidence and the litigants by highly trained jurors (766d-e). Not surprisingly, Plato restricts the role of rhetoric in this legal system with severe criticism that echoes his condemnation of rhetoric in the *Gorgias* (see *Laws* 937e-938c). In this, as in many other ways, Plato is fundamentally out of step with the still largely oral culture of contemporary Athens, a culture that in the fourth century manifests itself most prominently in the public oratory of the courts and assembly and a legal system in which public issues dominate. Athenian tragedy has largely recovered from Plato's strictures and is widely appreciated today for what it is; it is time that Athenian law be similarly appreciated.[55]

[55] Some recent work, such as Todd (1993) and Foxhall & Lewis (1996), is moving strongly in this direction. An earlier version of parts of this paper was presented to the International Society for the History of Rhetoric in Edinburgh, June 1995. I wish to thank the audiences at that meeting and at the Durban *Epos and Logos* conference for criticisms and suggestions. I am especially grateful to Anne Mackay for her help and encouragement.

CHAPTER NINE

DIALOGUE AND ORALITY IN A POST-PLATONIC AGE[1]

Harold Tarrant

Preamble

The wider aim of this paper is to argue that the history of the dialogue in antiquity has to be understood in terms of changing oral practices in the ancient world quite as much as of the conventions of a genre established by its classic practitioners: Plato, Aischines, and the early Aristotle. I concentrate here on *narratively presented* dialogue, which relates directly to the ordinary practice of story-telling.

In *Voice into Text*, I argued that some at least of Plato's dialogues had features that suggested dependence on oral methods of preserving the Socratic heritage, whereby stories of Socratic conversations circulated among those who enjoyed such tales.[2] The written work of Plato arose out of Plato's own activities in perpetuating these stories, but progressively depended on writing as arguments became more and more intricate. Plato, like other Socratics, would regularly have delivered his Socratic stories *as a narrative*, supplying appropriate background information, regardless of the form in which he recorded the text of the conversation. Only as his career developed, did Plato progress from the world of sub-oral literature to that of the unashamedly written text.

The question that will concern us here is the complex relation between narrated dialogue, as a written genre, and the oral telling of intellectual tales. The paper will concentrate on a later era, that of Plutarch and Lucian. In this age, writers of dialogues continue to depict the narration of intellectual events among an interested élite, now seriously, now humorously. The narrated dialogue also continues to provide a text

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[1] My thanks to participants at the *Epos and Logos* Conference, who have ensured that this paper is considerably more coherent and reflective than it might otherwise have been.

[2] Tarrant (1995: 129-47).

capable of being performed orally before an audience, sometimes a restricted one and at other times a more popular one. Thus it is arguable that the written text gives an indication of the oral performances witnessed by the intellectuals of the age. But might the depiction of oral activity be more indebted to the conventions of the genre, as established by popular works of Plato or by moral or literary ideals, than to contemporary observation? To put it bluntly, did a writer imitate Plato, theoretical archetypes, or life as he saw it?

The End of Mimesis *in Plato?*

This question necessitates discussion of *mimesis* in an unfamiliar but nevertheless important framework. Plato's own earlier products bear out his tendency seen in *Republic* 2, 3, and 10, to see literature as *mimetic*, as involving imitation of the human world, in particular of its speech.[3] Their mimetic status is perhaps confirmed by the comments made in the *Phaedrus* (275a, 278a) about the role of writing as a *memory-supplement*. Though ancient definitions of the genre involve both question-and-answer presentation and the presence of fully-drawn dramatic characters, what is essential to it is not question-and-answer dialogue, nor even discussion more generally, but rather the presence of characters who behave in a manner recognisably that of certain actual individuals or types.[4] Hence Plato's most famous model was the *Mimes* of Sophron,[5] the key to which was the writer's ability to capture a certain recognisable mode of human speech. Plato's writings, regardless of whether one regards their content as 'Socratic', started off as mimetic literature, taking real life character and conversation as their model. This

[3] I do not here wish to make any contribution to the vexed questions of how *mimesis* should be interpreted in Plato or in Aristotle. Rather I am influenced by *Republic* 10 generally and 3, 393c, in particular: "Surely to assimiliate oneself to another, either in voice or in manner, is to imitate the person to whom one assimilates oneself."

[4] One might here point to the proem (1) of Olympiodoros' *Commentary on the Gorgias*, where *prosopa* are the key to a *logos*' being called a *dialogos*, and where there is an assumption that Plato could be vulnerable to the same criticism as the tragic and comic playwrights whom he imitates in using these *prosopa*. In particular the lecturer seems bothered by the presence of those characters who employ 'bad' (i.e. morally bad) arguments, such as Gorgias, Polos, Kallikles, and Thasymachos. His defence of Plato is based on the fact that Plato's work includes criticism of these characters.

[5] Diog. Laert. 3.18. Rutherford (1995: 12) is cautious on how much should be read into the story. Sophron's titles suggest that the separation into 'male' and 'female' mimes reflected interest in the more intimate conversations of groups of one sex or the other.

is the reason why Plato brands the work of the dramatists and of Homer as *mimesis*, understanding their role in terms of their ability to portray realistic speech and action, even though neither art nor drama had acquired this realism at the expense of earlier symbolism until the later fifth century.

During Plato's development as a writer, there was a decrease in this dependence on real-life imitation. Dialogues commonly regarded as having been conceived before the *Republic* are for the most part 'mimetic';[6] *Republic* Book 1 is 'mimetic', but thereafter the will to imitate real life seems to have faded. The narrative mode of presentation persists in Books 2 to 10, in conformity with the conviction of Book 3 (392d-398b) that narrative presentation is superior in that it does not require the reciter to suppress his own identity and *adopt another's character*. The passage rejects in particular the perpetual change of style and tone associated with 'direct' or 'dramatic'[7] presentation (397b–e), and does so in a way that would have implications for much of Plato's earlier work. Plato appears especially keen to eliminate the realistic presentation of inferior persons, suggesting that the reciter would be debasing himself in the process.

Consequently Thrasymachos' heartfelt defence of injustice in Book 1, which cannot convincingly be read aloud without entering a little into Thrasymachean character, gives way in Book 2 to a defence that is philosophically quite as interesting but presented by characters with no obvious inclination towards injustice themselves. Glaukon is as co-operative and thoughtful an interlocutor as one might wish. Adeimantos is forthright, but not actually on the side of those whose case he states (367a). Both are characters for whom Sokrates can express admiration directly to the listeners (367e), so the reader who performs the text does

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[6] It would be legitimate to question whether this was really so in the *Menexenus*, where there is little opportunity for characterisation, and also in the rather technical *Cratylus*, which may in any case have been an on-going project. The 'middle-period' *Phaedo* is a little like the *Republic* in that it uses highly co-operative interlocutors and does not force the narrator to mimic an undesirable character (one might except Xanthippe's outburst at 60a), but (i) this is largely determined by the occasion, (ii) there still seems to be a very real desire to show something of Sokrates as he had been amongst his friends, and (iii) it would be natural that Plato should have showed some tendency to move in the direction dictated by the literary theory of the *Republic* before that work had progressed further than the drawing-board.

[7] I shall here use 'dramatic' (in inverted commas to distinguish it from the more general sense of the word) for such presentation, in which only the words of the participants are recorded in the text.

not need to play the part of an inferior character here. Indeed, there is a surprising uniformity of tone in Books 2 to 10: no need for a change of voice between speakers, and no dramatic clash of characters. The *prosopa* become uniformly 'aristocratic', modelled not upon Plato's memory of personal idiosyncrasies but upon his notion of the ideal teacher and of ideal participants in a philosophic conversation. Once the mimetic poets are expelled from the ideal state, the imitative aspect is all but expelled from Plato's account of it.

It may appear strange that the use of narrative presentation disappears from Plato's dialogues after the very work that appears to reject the 'direct' or 'dramatic' alternative; yet narration had only been a half-answer to Plato's misgivings about mimetic literature. It is not only his dialogues in 'dramatic' form that were vulnerable to the force of Plato's self-criticism: narrative dialogues had previously offered more dramatic variety, more emotional response; both of these are now rejected.[8] Narration had been used to assist the reader to capture emotions, changes of tone, and clashes of character. Without these narration becomes redundant; while ideologically sounder, it is already redundant within the *Republic* itself. Without realism, without emotional drama to supplement the subdued philosophic drama of the late dialogues, narrative has nothing to offer. It is therefore dropped. *Mimesis* is dropped. Of the three works generally placed after the *Republic*, but which stylometry would still seem to mark as 'middle period',[9] *Parmenides* begins in narrative mode but leaves it behind; while *Theaetetus* and *Phaedrus* resemble *Parmenides* in making some attempt at characterisation at first, only to lose sight of it later. Both conclude, somewhat tamely from the dra-

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[8] The very variety which made literature most pleasurable for pupil and schoolmaster alike (according to 397d) was now being excluded from the *Republic*'s text on the basis of arguments that the dialogue itself presents; note that the ability of mimetic literature to trigger emotional responses is regarded as the supreme criticism later (Book 10, 605c–608b).

[9] None of these dialogues exhibits characteristically 'late' clausulae patterns, and none avoids hiatus with any consistency, though some movement towards hiatus avoidance is seen *in the course of* the *Phaedrus*. Response formulae in the *Theaetetus* seem on average to accord with those of about the fifth book of the *Republic*, though with more characteristically 'early' or 'late' forms. Part 1 of *Parmenides* looks earlier in this respect, part 2 only a little later. While *Timaeus* and *Critias* do not exhibit typically 'late' clausulae-preferences, they remain far from typically 'early/middle' ones too, and hiatus avoidance places them *somewhere* within the stylistically 'late' group. This brief summary of what I take to be relevant is also supported by the letter-based stylometric analyses of Ledger (1989). On studies of Platonic chronology in general see Brandwood (1990).

matic point of view, with an idealised philosopher conversing with an over-obliging interlocutor, *Republic*-fashion.

Thereafter, Plato's dialogues speak to us as texts rather than as living people. It is tempting to suggest that in *Sophist, Politicus, Timaeus, Critias, Philebus*, and *Laws*, texts are unashamedly texts;[10] the rehabilitation of the text requires that it have a different role from living speech, so that it may exist as something other than the inferior image of the spoken word that had been criticised in the *Phaedrus*.[11] Dialogue becomes non-mimetic in the stylistically 'late' dialogues, choosing words for both interlocutors and questioners that conform with ideal philosophic practice rather than with any special character that the speakers possess. In these circumstances, it could be argued, dialogue ceases to be any indication of oral practice and develops as a self-sufficient written genre, imitated by a number of successors, including Aristotle in his lost early work, Cicero, Plutarch, and a multitude of others. Once it is Platonic literature that is imitated, rather than living conversations, dialogue is at risk of losing both its immediacy of appeal and its usefulness for assessing the strength of oral culture.

While there is an extent to which this judgement is valid, it is premature and its application is too universal. In all probability there is still a link, in Plato's 'late dialogues', with the actual discourse that took place in the Academy:[12] not only the written text, but also intellectual discussions, would have been modelled upon Plato's current conception of proper dialectical procedure: or proper *synusia* to use the incoming term. The *Laws* may be *introduced* as a conversation between three old men on a Cretan journey, but the reader soon forgets that he is supposed to be witnessing anything but an intellectual gathering in some quiet urban retreat. Three old men notice nothing about their changing environment for books on end, absorbed apparently in their exciting conversation. As for character, the Athenian Stranger is much as we imagine the ageing Plato to have been,[13] his interlocutors much as we imagine

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[10] A reader kindly points out that Kritias' narrative contains several features of oral narrative. My claim (qualified below) should perhaps be confined to the book-like nature of the conversational passages.

[11] 276a etc.

[12] This is particularly obvious in the *Philebus*, which has clearly evolved out of debate within the Academy, involving contributions from Eudoxos and Speusippos.

[13] That is not to say that the Stranger is simply Plato's mouthpiece, nor that he is a genuine self-portrait rather than an idealised version of the philosopher-teacher.

his friends and senior pupils. Glimpses of contemporary intellectual life continue.

Mimesis *Beyond Plato: (i) Plutarch*

There was in fact a fairly constant close relationship between philosophic oral practice and philosophic writing in antiquity. It is easy to see the relationship between 'Socratic' dialogues and Socratic practices, between Plato's portrait of sophists and sophistic practices, between Aristotelian lectures and the treatises that have reached us. Later in antiquity the lectures of late Neoplatonists on Platonic and Aristotelian texts were preserved for us warts and all, including passages that go back to missed points etc., by notetakers whose work was to record only, not to polish.[14] And while nobody will claim that Lucretius is evidence of Epicureans who lectured in hexameters, one has to acknowledge that some classroom practices, such as the *schola*,[15] also had the tendency to produce their literary imitations—whether or not those imitations did take on the names of those practices. There is no doubt that Cicero, who in *De Legibus*[16] is intent on placing his work in the tradition of Platonic *writing*, wanted to model his *Tusculan Disputations* on a particular type of class activity known as the *schola*. There is little less doubt that much of what Plutarch wrote in dialogue form was modelled on types of oral learned activity, from after-dinner discussion and entertaining narratives to the more serious philosophic debates, which had also been mimetically represented by Cicero. There is considerable evidence within his works for the continued richness of oral activity – something confirmed by Gellius' picture of the oral interaction between Plutarch's successor Taurus and his pupils.[17]

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[14] See Richard (1950).

[15] See Douglas (1995: particularly 199, 202-3). One should be more cautious over the *diatriba*, but one might also consider such forms as *sermones, disputationes*, and *sympoticae/symposiacae* etc.

[16] 1.1-3, and again at 1.15, where Cicero sees himself as a successor of Plato insofar as he follows a treatise on the ideal state with one on laws. As with Plato, the former has been presented in reported speech, while the latter prefers 'dramatic' dialogue.

[17] On this picture see now Lakmann (1995). See her texts 4-17 = *NA* 1.9, 1.26, 2.2, 7.10, 7.13, 8.6, 9.5.8, 10.19, 12.5, 17.8, 17.20, 18.10, 19.6, 20.4. These cover short conversations between master and pupils, reproof of pupils, topics arising during the reading of texts, after-dinner questions, and brief narrations of philosophic history.

In this context one might mention firstly the strange travellers' tales that are either told in full or briefly reported; in the former case (for instance Sulla's tale of islands north-west of Britain, *De Facie* 941a-945d) one might suspect Plutarch of telling a tale to demonstrate skills in handling a *literary* genre, but in the latter (e.g. Kleombrotos' tale of the lamp at the sanctuary of Ammon at *De Defectu* 410b) it is clear that we have a report of the kind of story that was regularly told. In the same work other travellers' stories are contributed at modest length, but in direct speech, by Philippos (419a), Demetrios (419e), and Kleombrotos again (retailing a stranger's story at 420e); strangely Demetrios' story here includes material that overlaps with Sulla's tale, and actually seems to go some way to authenticating the latter's status relating to some oral tradition. Philippos' story is confirmed within the dialogue by others who had heard it from a different source. While we know well that travellers' tales did form the basis of a literary genre—one that received its just debunking *as a literary genre* from Lucian in the *True Story*—we cannot doubt the vitality of the traveller's tale as an *oral* genre during this period. The same fascination with travel occurs within the Greek novel, where it seems clear that it was normal practice to plead to hear the story of those who appear to have an interesting background.[18]

A more challenging issue is the status of those stories that virtually constitute a whole work, narratives of learned conversations interspersed with a certain amount of action. As an example of the problem I can perhaps refer to Athenaios, whose basic material must surely be modelled on gastronomic discussions of his own age, but who presents such discussion in the form of an extended narrative. Its very length undermines its credibility as a story; and it began (1.3, 2a) with the most obvious and artificial of allusions to the opening of the most other-worldly of Plato's dialogues, the *Phaedo*; Athenaios is humorously playing with the traditional machinery of dialogue, while inverting its subject-matter. Clearly the frame-narrative cannot be taken seriously in this case.

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[18] I believe that this is particularly clear in Heliodoros, where so much material is revealed through the stories of Knemon and Kalasiris. Note Knemon's extreme enthusiasm for Kalasiris's story, 2.22-23, 2.32, 3.1-2, 5.4-5, and Nausikles' enthusiasm for the same story at 5.16. Knemon himself had been prevailed upon by Chariklea and Theagenes at 1.8. However, the opening of Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon* 1.2 is an excellent example of how, in the novel, a complete stranger can be prevailed upon to tell a tale of extreme length before he and his narratee have exchanged names!

Moving back to Plutarch, one may consider the case of the *Amatorius*, in which Autoboulos tells his father's tale of scandal surrounding an attractive widow marrying a younger man. Were such long and learned tales told? We are given to believe in the introduction that they could be readily told by those involved, and either written down or remembered by those to whom they were told—with a little co-operation from the original witness.[19] In this case we are invited to envisage a performance from memory by an invocation to Mnemosyne, and we are given good reason to think that it will be a 'natural' story without the embellishment of literary allusion.[20] As in the travellers' stories there is considerable interest in the *erga* recounted in the narrative, enlivening the moral theory that is itself presented with the dramatic flair of one who has learnt a little from his reading of Plato's own *Symposium*.[21] One strongly suspects that this was a sequence of events and discussions that Plutarch had often told to others, without the assistance of any written text or notes, though perhaps not in the same detail. It may seem strange, therefore, that the narrative is represented as a story told by Plutarch's son to a friend. This represents, I suggest, the dedication of the story to the younger generation, which itself marks the transition from oral to written literature. Sometimes the initial dedication may be even more explicit, as in the *De Defectu* (409e–410a), where it is similar to a mini-epistle, introducing a story that has unashamedly passed from memory to text.

Since both the 'dramatic' frame-dialogue and the address to a friend, for whom the work is at least notionally intended, are a way of fixing the audience of the narrative, they are essentially alternatives. The essay on Sokrates' divine sign takes the form of a politically significant narrative within a frame-dialogue, both set in the fourth century BC. Here I

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[19] "Are you saying, Autobulus, that it was on Helicon that the discussion about Eros was held which you either wrote out or committed to memory by repeatedly asking your father about it, and are now going to relate to us, at our special request." (748f, trans. Russell (1993).

[20] Flavianus' request to Autoboulos at 749a is for a narrative that does not artificially introduce naturally alluring settings after the fashion of the poets. In particular it makes reference to the famous setting of Plato's *Phaedrus*, on the banks of the Ilissus beneath the *agnus castus*, in what is rather like a rhetorical *praeteritio*: at once making a significant allusion and disowning those who allude less subtly. Whether Cicero's *De Legibus* (1.1-3) should be included among the latter is debatable, but allusion to this passage is certainly widespread, e.g. again Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon* 1.2 .

[21] One may here compare the *Dinner of the Seven Wise Men*, on which I refer the reader to Mossman (1997).

should like to draw attention to the introductory speech of Archedemos that distinguishes between the lazier listener who is content with the basics and the one who is avid for detail that can flesh out the picture (575c–d), and makes it clear that he requires not only *erga* but also *logoi*. Kaphisias worries not that his memory will fail him, but that the audience may not all have the necessary time and patience (575e); in response, Archedemos is able to demonstrate their standing and quality, as if that were a guarantee of their appetite for long stories embellished with *praxeis* and *logoi*. It is difficult to believe that Plutarch is not here using his personal experience of the reception of long and intricate tales (including details of conversation), and supposing that Greeks in their fourth-century past would have responded to stories similarly.

Hence Plutarch's dialogic works have emerged out of an intellectual background where the telling of long and detailed stories was routine, and in the dialogues of highest quality Plutarch is modelling himself less on classic examples of the genre than on ordinary practice in the intellectual circles that he was used to: something that Cicero seeks openly to do in the *Tusculan Disputations*.[22] In no sense does this mean that Plutarch's dialogues, let alone the *Tusculans* whose prologue is so conscious of the contribution being made to Roman writing, pretend to be oral literature—nor even literature to be read aloud by its creator for general entertainment. Rather it is there, written down, as an alternative means of communication, often for those at a distance or for future generations. And it is also packed with details that *might* be difficult to remember in the course of purely oral story-telling, but could emerge in the slower process of writing. Nor would I detect in either writer the use of building-blocks in the construction of the story that might imitate oral practice, such as have recently been detected in Xenophon of Ephesos.[23] In effect Plutarch has used writing to refine story-telling and to permit a level of detail that might otherwise have been rather difficult to achieve.

It is evident that I cannot accept the judgement of Bompaire and Reardon that "c'est simplement en imitation de son célèbre devancier Platon que le philosophe [sc. Plutarque] l'a utilisée [sc. la forme littéraire du dialogue]."[24] The novelty of Plutarch is amply demonstrated

22 It is worth noting that while Plutarch usually represents discussions between a senior figure and his friends, Cicero is in this work depicting a master-pupil relationship.

23 See O'Sullivan (1995). I confess myself not wholly persuaded by O'Sullivan's argument.

24 Reardon (1971), quoting Bompaire (1958: 298-300).

by Mark Riley,[25] who, starting with the conventional premise that the *De Genio Socratis* is modelled on the *Phaedo*, puzzles over the very loose connection between the philosophic topic and the narration of events, and concludes by postulating an underlying link between demonically-guided philosophy and demonically-guided political heroism: precisely the kind of message that one would expect to emerge from Plutarch's intellectual circle, with its combined interest in history and religiosity. Nowhere else would one expect stories with so clear a double interest in *praxis* and *theoria*. That double interest is precisely what makes the narrated dialogue so suitable a form for conveying Plutarch's ideas.

Mimesis *Beyond Plato: (ii) Lucian*

Now to Lucian in whom dialogue *emerges from* a background culture of story-telling and, for the most part, *concludes in* an orally-delivered performance. Lucian's comic adaptations of the dialogue form, while they vary greatly in structure and content, include humorous imitations (or parodies) of real-life story-telling that involve the sharing of an amusing (or bizarre) tale with an interlocutor who seeks to be entertained. Such stories might be told often enough today in pubs and similar places of relaxation. My principal interest here is with this type of dialogue, in which stories about words and deeds together are delivered by one participant in a 'dramatic' dialogue to one or more interlocutors. Works that adopt this structure include the two longer Menippos-works, *Menippus* and *Icaromenippus*, two pieces in which Lucian employs the private-eye-like interlocutor Lykinos, and one, *Philopseudes*, in which the figure of Tychiades appears to play the role of Lucianic critic. This last is interesting insofar as it depicts Tychiades relating a long story in the course of which several revered figures will tell shorter and grossly improbable stories. The stories within the story, being involved with the wonders of the occult, bear out the impression given by Plutarch that such tales were popular among religiously inclined intellectuals—though obviously the portraits of such story-tellers are more hostile in a satirical author like Lucian. *Philopseudes* is in fact an attack on over-imaginative story-telling among those who should have known better, in

25 Riley (1977: 257-74).

much the same way as *Vera Historia* is an attack on over-imaginative *written* stories among those with serious pretensions. His satirical purposes are such that one can, with care, draw conclusions from many dialogues about contemporary literary practice, both written and oral.[26]

Lucian's interest in incredible stories is again at the forefront in the Menippos-works in which the cynic debunker tells his story of visits beyond the earthly realm. The story is such that it cannot sound natural in itself, and the opening immediately places the work within a sub-genre of the dialogue of which fantasy is a key ingredient. *Menippus* begins with the quasi-cynic hero spouting iambics, and ridiculously dressed as a combination of Odysseus, Herakles, and Orpheus. *Icaromenippus* begins with him calculating the distance of his astral journey. The central figure remains as stunningly bizarre in the frame dialogue as in the narrative, which is not altogether surprising if one acknowledges that the whole purpose of this sub-genre is to gain a non-human perspective on the human world, even if narrated in a casual, matter-of-fact manner: it's sole point of resemblance to every-day story-telling.

By contrast the stories of Lykinos and Tychiades emerge more slowly and naturally out of the introductory conversation, and are amusing primarily because they are rooted in the familiar realities of story-telling. The part of the story-teller can be performed naturally by Lucian, giving a malicious plausibility to the detailed accounts of the exploits and sayings of the would-be wise. The author was surely an expert story-teller himself, a master at stimulating and retaining interest in what he has to say up until the last climactic, or anti-climactic, line. Nor are such stories always presented through a dialogue as the excellent *Death of Peregrinus*—a biography in epistolary form—shows. Yet, where the emphasis within the story is going to fall on the *spoken words of others* rather than a series of deeds, a dialogue-frame seems to have

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26 It is pointless here to become involved in the debate about the extent to which Lucian dwells in his own present or in the glorious past of classical Greece. His use of classical structures, classical religion, classical attic, and even on occasions classical ionic, do not make him any the less a product of the second sophistic period, nor any the less conscious of the contemporary significance of all that he was doing. Audiences did not laugh at ancient history; rather they laughed at the parodic intrusion of the contemporary world into the literary worlds which his activities visit. Dissenters are referred to Jones (1986).

been a natural choice. This again points to the prevalence among the learned of stories about great conversations on great occasions.

When I talk of the naturalness of the introductory conversation and of the actual story-telling in these narrated dialogues, I am not denying that Lucian is simultaneously parodying the conventions of the serious genre.[27] *Symposium or Lapiths* parodies the Platonic *Symposium* from square one, with its suggestion that a rival version of the tale has been inaccurate and incomplete.[28] Yet the *narrations* of words and deeds designed to expose bogus philosophers have a plausibility that contrasts sharply with the unreal subject-matter of several 'dramatic' dialogues aimed at these same philosophers: *Vitarum Auctio*, *Piscator*, or *Bis Accusatus* for instance, all of which employ Olympians and/or personifications in significant roles. This is not to say that all 'dramatic' dialogues lack realism, and all narrated ones embrace it, nor that such realism as exists is not overlaid by parodic play with the conventions of the genre, still ultimately Platonic, and other humorous devices. The important factor is that readers or listeners should feel themselves initially to be listening to a story of a familiar type, emerging naturally from within a discussion between a narrator and his friend. The frame-dialogue, in prescribing an intimate audience for the story-teller, assists us in seeing him as a private wit and witness rather than as the theatrical performer of a manufactured tale.

Text into Performance

Among the most privileged story-tellers of the age was Lucian himself, who sometimes delivered a carefully prepared story in the theatre as an alternative to set speeches or dramatic sketches. He is the principal champion of his own art, and it may well be that with a 'dramatic' dialogue he could have read a number of parts, changing his intonation, and possibly even some mask, costume, or symbol between speakers. The chief exception that confronted Bellinger in his classic study of Lucian's performability was the *Fisherman*,[29] though I strongly suspect that there were other exceptions too. The change of intonation remains a possibility within a narration, so that one is able to bring a reading to life with-

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[27] On parody in Lucian, see Branham (1989).
[28] Cf. *Symp*. 172b4-c6.

out resorting to the farce of costume-changes. But when that narration occurs within a frame dialogue it may demand *more* than changes of intonation if the author is to distinguish clearly the two separate scenes of debate. Did Lucian need an off-sider who is able to lead the audience in dragging the story out of the pseudo-reluctant narrator?

There are three reasons why I suspect that this may have been the case. First, the narrator in works of this form is likely to be some kind of Lucianic *alter ego*, either Lykinos or Menippos. If the audience is expected to identify one character in particular with Lucian it will be a distraction if the author plays both parts. Second, the naturalness of the conversation from which the narration evolves helps the audience to identify with the privileged character who receives the story, and to react in a similar fashion as would be the case if the story were true. A performer who reads both parts will forfeit this naturalness and this privileging of the audience. No purpose would have been achieved by the frame-dialogue if the narratee's interaction with the narrator had not seemed relatively true to life.[30] For narrator and narratee to be played by the same person would have impeded this natural interaction. Third, Lucian clearly regards his comic dialogues as an innovation, and skills in delivering a comic dialogue needed time to develop; the skills required for a single performer to present the words of (i) narrator, (ii) narratee, and (iii) characters within the narrative would have developed only with time and experience. Overall conversations narrated within a frame-dialogue made more performance demands, and frame-dialogues, inessential to the genre, would have been dropped if not achieving some independent purpose *in performance*.

It is scarcely believable that the mature Lucian would not have had a well-trained slave available to play a minor role if required. The part of the narratee would be much shorter and require fewer delivery-skills than that of the narrator, and thus it would make an ideal role for such an assistant. An off-sider could likewise have played the more normal, much briefer role in the *Nigrinus*. One or more assistants would have been able to help enormously with the rendering of *Piscator* and certain other direct dialogues. For instance, *Vitarum Auctio*, though able to be a

[30] This remains the case in the larger Menippean dialogues, where the extravagant fantasy of the narration itself stands in contrast to the words of the understandably intrigued listener. Note how in *Menippus*, after his first stunned words, the interlocutor who finds the hero bizarrely dressed, decides to approach, say hello, ask where he's been, and say how long it has been since he has seen him.

reasonable success when delivered by a single performer, might have been most easily delivered with one slave to play Zeus, one to play Hermes, and another to play the succession of buyers: leaving Lucian the challenge of representing the idiosyncrasies of the various philosopher-philosophies parodied.

While the comic dialogue was clearly something of a Lucianic invention,[31] it is important that it emerged as part of the repertoire of one who was originally a rhetorical performer. Unless he brandished a text before his eyes when giving oratorical entertainment, then his dialogues too would have been performed from memory. That is what the audience would have expected, and spontaneity will have assisted comic performance. For a spontaneous performance, dependent on memory, the narrated dialogues were surely suitable. So were fast-moving 'dramatic' pieces, such as *Vitarum Auctio* or *Bis Accusatus*. Unsuitable were the long, apodeictic *Hermotimus* (clearly something for the more serious private reader) and, in its final form at least, the *Nigrinus* with its introductory epistle.[32] Nothing should encourage us to see all Lucian's dialogues as having the same relation to oral performances. He is an experimenter with both the written and the spoken word, untied by any previous performance conventions.

On the other hand Cicero's or Plutarch's dialogues were not intended for any similar virtuoso performance, but (for the most part) for the private edification and even amusement of serious-minded friends. While a post-prandial reading of a Plutarch dialogue is not out of the question, it seems that the texts remained *imitations of* post-prandial discussion (and the like) rather than something that would return to feature as part of it. While dialogue in the Roman period preserves evidence of the telling of

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[31] See *Bis Accusatus* 28, 33-34. Note Lucian's claim at 34, through the persona of the Syrian, to have been *first* to make Dialogue "walk on the ground *in this human manner*" making him smile, yoking him with Comedy, and thus making him welcome *to his hearers*. 'Hearers' is the standard way of referring to the witnesses of a performance in this work (cf. 28: μειδίαμα παρὰ τῶν ἀκουόντων, 33: σύνθετόν τι καὶ ξένον φάσμα τοῖς ἀκούουσι δοκῶ). There is perhaps a suggestion that the audience for Dialogue is a popular one in the words (34) οὐδὲ τοῖς πλήθεσι κεχαρισμένον which are what is answered by τὴν εὔνοιαν παρὰ τῶν ἀκουόντων.

[32] One should be cautious here. Pliny, *Ep.* 1.20.6, 9, shows quite clearly that the Roman world acknowledged the difference between a written version and a performed version of a text, though in that case an oratorical text. Nothing prevents a slightly different *Nigrinus* from having been performed, and it is entirely thinkable that *Hermotimus* is a serious dialogue for reading that grew out of a performable satirical sketch on the same subject.

tales or delivery of speeches by philosophers, it does not seem to support the thesis that philosophers performed their own dialogues orally. Classic dialogues, such as those of Plato, would be read among others and employed as a basis for study, but where is the evidence *within dialogue* for a contemporary author giving an *oral performance of his own dialogue*?[33]

Lucian, then, as an entertainer who *performed* dialogue, was a considerable innovator. It would be no surprise, perhaps, if this innovation had only come about via the intermediate step of telling stories with a considerable proportion of conversation.[34] If that is so, then the Lucian of the dialogue and the Lucian of bizarre fiction may not be so very far apart—indeed both may be the result of a young rhetor discovering that the narrative within a speech was particularly suited to his skills of delivery. Looked at from the point of view of written texts, Lucian is the sophist whose versatility lay in the search for new written genres to parody. Looked at from the point of view of performance, Lucian is a rhetor whose story-telling and theatrical abilities led him beyond oratory to the telling of tales and the acting of imaginary scenes.

Conclusion

We have seen good reason to believe that Plutarch and Lucian, as writers of dialogues in narrative form, are influenced by the continued vitality of the practice, among intellectuals, of telling stories about suitably

[33] No doubt the established aim of the dialogue is to represent the *spontaneous discourse of the learned* by which they could demonstrate the effectiveness of their rhetorical education. Yet it did not of itself lend itself to improvisation in the same manner, so that it does not ordinarily represent the performance of dialogue. It did, however, represent the delivery of narratives that included extensive reporting of discussions.

[34] Readers will no doubt be reminded here of some of the broader theories of Mikhail Bakhtin, as seen for instance in Bakhtin (1981). The comparisons drawn in this paper between features of the novel and features of the later dialogues may also suggest an agenda in some way related to Bakhtin. In fact, however, my reasons for these comparisons are much simpler: the presence of narratives on various scales in both, some similarity in date, and the fact that one writer of dialogue (Lucian), and one Platonist of Plutarchian lineage (Apuleius: see *Met.* 1.2, 2.3), wrote extant works capable of being described as 'novels'. One might also add that the background plot of Plutarch's *Amatorius* has affinities with the romantic novel, and that the accompanying *logoi* do their best to depict Ismenodora as something a little like an appropriate romantic heroine, endowed with chastity (as Plutarch's argument makes clear), courage, and other desirable virtues. Plutarch's ideal of a marriage that is a real partnership, and a fusion in body and soul alike, passionate yet somehow chaste, is close to the ideals of the romantic novels and their readers.

elevated words and deeds. While to some degree remaining indebted to the conventions of Plato's more literary dialogues, they are not just imitators of literature but also imitators of life as they saw it, frequently depicting persons of their own era conversing in a manner typical of that era. We have seen how Lucian himself has taken over the role of a teller of mock-high-brow stories within dramatic sketches being performed in the theatre. Voices inspire text, text inspires voices. I use the plural 'voices' with some conviction not only because characterisation had been from the beginning a feature of the narrative dialogue, but because the narrative dialogue encourages the re-emergence of a plurality of voices in performance. By the second century AD narration is becoming a complex skill, extending beyond the plurality of conversing voices within a text to the interplay of a variety of narrative voices, at least in authors such as Apuleius and Heliodoros.[35] Internal narrators are found within the narrative of Plutarch too,[36] within Lucian's *Philopseudes* and even within the *Symposium* if one can count the reported tale of Dionikos at 20 and the letter of Hetoimokles at 22–25 that also has a story to tell. Again Lucian's *principal* narrative voices include such different characters as Lykinos, Tychiades, and Menippos. All this variation is not surprising. In an age where *prosopopoiia* (dramatisation of character) has become a standard feature of the rhetorical handbook,[37] as well as narration and character-delineation, the capturing of shades of character in both text and oral delivery must have been a goal that those

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[35] I am thinking of course of the work of Winkler (1985 and 1982).

[36] At *Amatorius* 760e ff., for instance, Plutarch's son has Plutarch himself indulge in an extended series of stories. At 768b-d we have his story of Kamma, at 770d-771c that of Empona. Yet at the point where we might have expected a messenger's narrative, where the report of Ismenodora's kidnapping of her intended partner is given (754e-755b), Plutarch chooses to allow the circumstances to be reported by the first narrator: perhaps with the intention of avoiding theatricality. The messenger, as it turns out, had only been able to report the barest details, before prompting an immediate reaction.

[37] See Theon, *Progymnasmata*, 115.12-16 for a definition: Προσωποποιΐα ἐστὶ προσώπου παρεισαγωγὴ διατιθεμένου λόγους οἰκείους ἑαυτῷ τε καὶ τοῖς ὑποκειμένοις πράγμασιν ἀναμφισβητήτως, οἷον τίνας ἂν εἴποι λόγους ἀνὴρ πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα μέλλων ἀποδημεῖν, ἢ στρατηγὸς τοῖς στρατιώταις ἐπὶ τοὺς κινδύνους. Interesting is 60.23ff.: τῶν δὲ ῥητορικῶν τῷ τόπῳ κεχρημένων. καὶ ἡ προσωποποιΐα δὲ οὐ μόνον ἱστορικὸν γύμνασμά ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ῥητορικὸν καὶ διαλογικὸν καὶ ποιητικόν, κἀν τῷ καθ' ἡμέραν βίῳ, κἀν ταῖς πρὸς ἀλλήλους ὁμιλίαις πολυωφελέστατον, καὶ πρὸς τὰς ἐντεύξεις τῶν συγγραμμάτων χρησιμώτατον. διὰ τοῦτο πρῶτον μὲν Ὅμηρον ἐπαινοῦμεν, ὅτι οἰκείους λόγους περιτέθεικεν ἑκάστῳ τῶν εἰσαγομένων προσώπων.

with literary ambitions strove to achieve.[38] That rhetoricians should have in mind the same kind of dramatisation as they admired in Homer, Plato, and Menander,[39] indicates the intense interest in using voices to bring their work to life: not just in works for reading, but in works that will be given public oral performance. If the narrators of Plutarch's and Lucian's dialogues genuinely reflect the existence of some accomplished story-tellers within the educated community, then orators who wished to impress the public with a plurality of voices, narrative or otherwise, needed to be able to do more than just capture character in the written word—they had to learn like Lucian to rival such story-tellers in versatility of delivery.

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[38] Pliny could be seen to be regretting that he was not himself a many-voiced performer at *Ep.* 9.34, where he discusses the problems that arise from his being a poor reciter of poetry as opposed to a rhetorician.

[39] Theon *Progymnasmata* 68.21-24.

CHAPTER TEN

VIRGIL'S FORMULARITY AND *PIUS AENEAS*[1]

Merritt Sale

John Foley has recently studied the aesthetic power of formulae in poetry either composed in oral performance, or composed in writing by poets who imaginatively reproduced the performance arena.[2] Can we also apply his thoughts to the formulae employed by writing poets, probably unfamiliar with that arena, who place themselves in a tradition that was once oral? Quintus of Smyrna comes to mind: he offers an excellent imitation of Homeric style—but not much else. Apollonius Rhodius is a better poet, but much less formulaic. Virgil is more promising: his style is closer to Homer than Apollonius', while his poetry is much greater than Quintus'. Granted, the *Aeneid* sometimes disowns the formulaic, and sounds quite unlike a poem "imaginatively reproducing the performance arena". But at other times Virgil employs countless formulae with astonishing adroitness; given a little more variety in his frequently-occurring formulae, he could have composed orally had he chosen to.[3] To acquire such mastery over Homer's technique was a demanding and seemingly gratuitous task for the literate poet; it certainly behooves us to uncover the aesthetic effect that cost Virgil so much.

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[1] A great deal of Latin is cited in what follows, along with a little Greek. In many cases the meaning is not strictly relevant to the discussion, which very often concerns only the sound and look of the word—the signified. Much of the remainder probably requires no translation, but there are exceptions. *Pius* ('devoted', roughly) and the related noun *pietas* are discussed at length at the end; the quotation from R. G. Austin on p. 215 below gives an excellent introduction to an understanding of its meaning. Other words or phrases that might offer difficulty will be translated as they arise.

[2] Foley (1991) and (1995). Foley deals also with the aesthetics of theme and story pattern; if I single out formulae, it is not because I lack warm appreciation for these other sides of his criticism: see my review of Foley's trilogy: Sale (1996a).

[3] We even hear of his using *tibicines* (props) "lest anything impede the flow of composition", just as an oral poet composing rapidly might find a ready-made formula handy for keeping the verse flowing. Cf. Suetonius, *Vita Virgilii* 24. Suetonius calls the *tibicines* '*imperfecta*' to be replaced upon revision; formulae are not imperfections, but Virgil can have replaced some while redrafting portions of his poem into a less formulaic style. See p. 207 below on Turnus and Venus.

First (under *Virgil as a Formulaic Poet*) we shall show—in considerable technical detail, regrettably—how Homer and Virgil shared the concept of 'formula', so that we can then go on to expose Virgil's "mastery over Homer's technique". We then note that Virgil "disowns the formulaic" when formulae run the risk of affirming the value of romantic love and individual heroism, ideals inconsistent with the melancholy but necessary triumph of the *pax Romana*. The section closes by reviewing the work on formulae by recent Virgilians. In *Virgil's Intention* we argue that Virgil acquired his formulaic expertise not in order to imitate Homer or to replicate Homeric content—most of his formulae say things quite different from what Homer says—but to be an independent witness to the age of the Trojan War and tell the essential and traditional truths that formulae tell.

Then (under *Pius Aeneas*) we shall examine some specific formulae, and subject *pius Aeneas* (and the phrase *insignem pietate virum*, 1.10: a man renowned for *pietas*) to a close literary exegesis. After that, in the spirit of the Homeric scholar Aristarchus, we show that this formula assets a particular truth: the Trojan past and the Roman future are linked by Aeneas' *pietas erga patrem, erga deos, erga patriam*, and *erga rem publicam Romanam* (devotion to father, gods, fatherland and Roman commonwealth). Finally we can let Foley's approach enrich the poetic texture: each time a basic formula is used, the whole of a traditional figure is summoned to the audience's ear; therefore every occurrence of *pius Aeneas* offers us not only his *pietas*, but his other qualities, and especially the quality, referred to by the formula *pater Aeneas*, that gives his *pietas* its external form.

Virgil as Formulaic Poet

Let us begin with a dilemma. Most of Virgil's formulae replicate Homer's style but not his content: for every direct borrowing, such as *Aeneas Anchisiades*, there are many more phrases Homeric in form alone: *(et) pius Aeneas, Sidonia Dido, ora parentum*, etc. Are these mere reminders of Homer, to be set alongside the countless places assembled by Knauer where Virgil is adapting the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to suit his own characters and events?[4] Or are they evidence that Virgil had learnt the

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[4] Knauer (1964: *passim*).

formulaic *technique* from Homer, and can now take an independent place alongside his former master? Or, phrasing it a little differently: Do we say, each time we hear *pius Aeneas*, "Virgil the Homeric imitator is reminding us that this *pius* man is a Homeric hero." Or do we say instead, "Virgil the formulaic poet is asserting that this traditional (not merely Homeric) figure is the man who brought Trojan *pietas* to Italy and planted Roman *pietas* there."

To show that Virgil and Homer shared the formulaic technique, we must begin by showing that they shared the same concept of the formula. We should therefore be discussing all the scholarship on Virgil's style and Homer's formulae; unfortunately we must confine ourselves to Milman Parry, Albert Lord, and the few recent Virgilians who have talked about formulae specifically. Moreover, we must assume that Parry's belief in Homeric orality is justified, and his often unsatisfactory arguments reasonably familiar to the readers.[5] But even with our task thus reduced, we immediately face another dilemma. Parry, who ought to know, speaks of Virgil as using formulae, *formules*, and specifically noun-epithet formulae; but Lord, who also ought to know, has vigorously objected that Virgil does not have true formulae, "as Parry proved in detail years ago."[6] Since Parry's "proof in detail" is offered in the very passage where Parry speaks of Virgil's 'formulae', we cannot take Lord literally; but we cannot simply dismiss so authoritative a voice, either. Parry does argue that Virgil lacks extensive and economical *systems* of formulae, so that Lord probably meant that 'true formulae' are *systemic* formulae. The systems that Parry had in mind in this passage consist of noun-phrase formulae in a given grammatical case that belong to a certain type (i.e. are of a given metrical value and are made up of particular parts of speech);[7] if such systems contain many formulae with the same metre and syntax, they are *extensive*; and if they have very few different formulae with the same noun and different distinctive epithets in the same case and metre, then they are *metrically economical*.[8] Parry

[5] Cf. Sale (1996b). I shall criticise Parry freely in what follows, but his belief can be successfully defended.

[6] Parry (1971: 29-36). Lord (1995: 104).

[7] Later Parry widens the meaning of 'system' to "groups of phrases which have the same metrical value and which are enough alike in thought and words to leave no doubt" that they are "formulae of a certain type" (Parry [1971: 275]); still later he gradually loses interest in likeness of thought and words, concerned now only with common syntax and metre; then he even ignores syntax (Parry [1971: 313]).

[8] Parry (1971: 17). A distinctive epithet is used with only one noun in a given case

thinks that Virgil has formulae but not fully systemic formulae; Lord says that therefore he lacks true formulae.[9]

Clearly we are not going to show that Virgil used a formulaic style without untying this conceptual knot; but the attempt to do so leads to deeper difficulties. Both Parry and Lord have strayed from the truth: Virgil's seemingly formulaic phrases do belong to systems, and his systems are extensive in one sense but not in another. He has many different formulae with the same metre and syntax (e.g. *Sidonia Dido*, *Saturnia Iuno*); let us call this *different-formulae* extension. But individual occurrences of such formulae are relatively few; he lacks *frequent-occurrence extension. Pater Aeneas* in 2-5, the commonest exact formulaic repetition in the *Aeneid*, occurs only 16 times, *pius Aeneas* 15 times, and most formulae much less frequently. Contrast Odysseus in the *Odyssey*, with one formula exactly repeated 79 times and another 66 times; 13 other *Odyssey* formulae occur 20 times or more. Moreover, the formulae in Virgil's systems often violate metrical economy (see note 8

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and position; generic epithets are used with more than one. If a formula with a generic has the same noun-referent, metre and syntax as another, economy is usually not violated; to violate economy, the poet must add something new to his formulaic repertory. To see how this works, consider (*at*) *pater Aeneas* alongside (*at*) *pius Aeneas*, both running from 2-5. Parry (1971: 31) calls this a violation: two formulae for the same person in the same case are performing the same metrical task. And indeed no Homeric figure has two regularly-employed formulae that are so closely parallel: same conjunction and noun, metrically identical epithets. But technically Parry is wrong. Picture Virgil as already possessing *pater Anchises* and *pius Aeneas*, but not *pater Aeneas*. He wants another formula for Aeneas. If he had written *At miser Aeneas*, this really would violate economy, since *miser* is nowhere used as an epithet in this position, and we would have a new overlapping formula. But by reaching over and plucking *pater* from Anchises, he has not added to his formulaic vocabulary, because *pater* in this metrical position was already there.

The reader might very well object here that though (*at*) *pater Aeneas* and (*at*) *pius Aeneas* are metrically identical, they have different meanings and are therefore not interchangeable. But the oral poet is not necessary interested in having his different frequently-employed formulae express different meanings; when they do, they will have different metres. If, in a given line, it is important that a meaning different from the meaning of a frequent formula be expressed in the same metrical slot, a formula can be coined. See Sale (1989: 390-91).

[9] For Foley (1990: 4 *et al.*), formulae in one tradition are not the same as formulae in another, because different traditions have different rules of composition. My own experience in moving through Greek, Roman, Mediaeval French, Mediaeval Spanish, and Bosnian is that we make adjustments in our quantitative analysis, but the *concept* of the phrasal formula remains the same, and works well: each culture yields almost identical algebraic equations for the rate at which formulaic occurrences and different formulae appear as the poet proceeds (cf. Sale [1996b: 409]). In any case the current paper can probably eschew this problem, because Virgil's compositional rules are very like Homer's: his verse is quantitative, observes a regular caesura, employs word-type localisation, and illustrates the principle of right-justification, whereby the end of the line is rhythmically less free than the beginning.

above). An oral poet cannot afford to carry, in his already bulging toolkit, systems of formulae that perform the same metrical/syntactic task; Virgil can. And an oral poet, composing rapidly, uses many formulae over and over; Virgil does not. Virgil is not an oral poet; but we might reasonably call him a formulaic poet.

To test this hypothesis, I want to examine some of the meanings that Parry gave the term 'formula'. There are seven in all; let us begin with the narrowest, "a group of words that is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea" (Parry [1971: 272]). For Parry the 'essential idea' of most noun-epithet formulae (defined Parry [1971: 20 n.1]) meant the noun-referent, since he found the epithets merely stylistic and the audience indifferent to their meaning (Parry [1971: 127-36]). But the theory of audience indifference has been challenged successfully, and should be discarded—leaving us forced to redefine 'essential idea'. Taking our cue from Aristarchus (cf. Parry [1971: 120-23] and page 212f below), we shall mean that one part of the formula expresses what is essential to another part, or to the whole; thus the epithets not only express ideas, but the ideas are essential to—always true of—the noun-referent. Such noun-epithets, together with certain noun-verb phrases, if they fall in the most basic cola and meet the commonest syntactic needs, form a subset that we can properly label MULTI-PURPOSED FORMULAE: MPF—the most *useful* formulae. Because they express ideas that are always true, they are context-free: they can be used anywhere in epic poetry that metre and syntax permit. And metre and syntax usually do permit. Thus the various formulae for "swift-footed Achilles" are context-free, because awake or asleep Achilles is always swift of foot; they fill the cola after the feminine caesurae, the hephthemimeral caesurae and the bucolic diaeresis; and they are in the nominative case, which proper nouns most often need. There are many formulae that are not MPF, but it is the extensive and economical systems of MPF used over and over that most reveal the voice of the oral poet.

Somewhat surprisingly, most of Virgil's many systemic formulae are MPF. The phrase *(et) pius Aeneas*, for instance, is in the nominative case, the most frequent for proper nouns. Though the noun-epithet itself occupies 2-5, it can always be extended backwards freely with an appropriate monosyllable so as to occupy one of Virgil's favourite cola, 1-5.[10]

[10] Each number corresponds to one of the 12 half-feet in the hexameter line; the numbering system was devised by Eugene O'Neill, Jr. and set forth in O'Neill (1942:

And it is context-free (Aeneas is always and everywhere *pius*), though Virgil always uses it contextually. Similarly *at puer Ascanius* is in the nominative, occupies 1-5, and is context-free, since in Virgil Ascanius is always a *puer*. Exactly the same formulaically are *(et) pater Aeneas, (et) pater Anchises, tum satus Anchisa* and other nominatives in 1-5. In 9-12, another favourite colon, we find the context-free *fidus Achates, maxima Iuno, regia Iuno, fortis Asilas, acer Atinas* and many others. In 8-12 we have *Saturnia Iuno, Sidonia Dido*, and so forth. Most noun-epithet MPF are in the nominative, but we get *fortemque Cloanthum* and *fortemque Sorestem* and others in the accusative. We might note a few of the common nouns: *montibus altis* (9-12, all epic mountains are high, and the locative is clearly the commonest case for them); *fulgentibus armis* (8-12, arms by nature flash, and the instrumental-sociative is the obvious case). Parallel to these are such noun-verb phrases as *haec ubi dicta dedit* (ὣς ἄρα φωνήσας), where the idea of the verb is implied by the noun (speaking is essential to *dicta*); none of the words imposes a restriction on the free employment of the idea. This sample ought to be enough to at least hint at the profusion of Virgil's MPF, and prove that he shares the concept with Homer.

They also share systemic structures with different-formula extension (page 202 above): Virgil probably invented most of his individual MPF, but he did not invent the *formula-types* they belong to, such as "nominative noun-epithets in 1-5", or ". . . after the feminine caesura", or ". . . after the bucolic diaeresis". Homer and the epic tradition gave him those. Walter Moskalew says that "the profusion of epithets in itself evokes the traditional epic style."[11] We have taken three additional steps towards establishing Virgil as a formulaic poet: the shared concept of multi-purposed formulae, the shared structures into which they fit, and the shared different-formula extension—i.e. the abundance of different formulae of the same type.

Of course we cannot stop here: mastering the formulaic style means learning how to use the many formulae that are not MPF. Again we turn to Parry's concept of the Homeric formula. Unfortunately we cannot adopt his three very widest definitions—phrases with nothing more in common than their metre, or their metre and syntax, or their metre and

113). Thus 1-5 ends at the penthemimeral caesura, 7-12 begins at the hephthemimeral, and 9-12 begins at the bucolic diaeresis.

[11] Moskalew (1982: 85).

syntax and a shared word (Parry [1971: 313]); we need to identify formulae as precisely as possible, and these phrases lend themselves to imprecision. We must set them aside, reluctantly, and turn to the other four (cf. Sale [1996b: 381-82]): 1: MPF; 2: other regularly-employed formulae (usually 6 exact repetitions or more in a given poem); 3: infrequent formulae (2-5 exact repetitions); 4: inexact repetitions (the whole phrase is not exactly repeated, but each part is). Let us give the name PHRASAL formulae to all noun-phrases (including noun-verbs) or verb-phrases (verb plus adverb, participle or object pronoun) that occupy these four categories and are not repeated for the sake of repetition.[12]

In practice it proves very difficult to make comparisons of pure verb-phrases from one tradition to another, and so at this stage in our studies we shall be counting noun-phrases (including noun-verbs) exclusively. Let us ask whether Virgil has noun-phrase formulae that fit all four categories of phrasal formulae:

1. We have seen a sufficient sample of his MPF; Virgil has shown us that he knows how to use these tools of oral composition.
2. Virgil has other REGULARLY-EMPLOYED FORMULAE: *toto . . . corpore*, *Troiana iuventus*, and *sidera tollit*, for instance. Far fewer than Homer, to be sure: counting *all* the formulae that occur 6 times or more, whether MPF or not, the *Odyssey* has 203, where the *Aeneid* has only 16.[13] This, however, is enough to confirm Virgil's awareness that formular poets use some formulae very frequently.
3. Virgil has about 1300 *different* infrequent formulae; a fair number are MPF, more are not.
4. Where Virgil most elegantly displays his mastery of the formulaic technique is in his handling of inexact repetitions—more than 1000 all told. These formulae take one of three possible forms: either they contain a patronymic (which need not be exactly repeated as long as each part is—e.g. *Anchis-*, *-iades*); or they are formed with a generic (verbs or epithets that occur with another noun in the same case,

[12] "For the sake of repetition" is well defined by Moskalew's "Repetition by Design": quotations, affirmation, fulfilment; ring-composition; making an analogy or a contrast; or foreshadowing (Moskalew [1982: 108-135]).

[13] Sparrow (1931), whose criterion for frequency is coincidentally the same as mine (more than 5 exact repetitions) lists 17 frequent repetitions; his list includes several pure verb-phrases and *montibus altis* (he apparently read 8.692 with Servius), and he misses *ipse Latinus, fulgentibus armis, toto . . . corpore, talibus . . . dictis, ora parentum,* and *ad sidera tollit.*

each phrase occupying exactly the same position in the verse); or else they must be Hainsworth-alterations.[14]

The reader knows what a patronymic is; but the other two concepts may be less familiar: *generics* are adjectives or verbs used, not just of only one noun, like "rosy-fingered" and "wine-dark", or of a few familiar figures in any context, like "swift-footed Achilles" (but also Iris) and "Menelaus splendid at the war-cry" (but also Diomedes); a good generic, such as μεγάθυμος (great of soul), can be applied to anyone anywhere. The epithet *magnanimus* is found in 1.260 and 9.204 in the accusative *magnanimum Aenean.* If it appeared only here, we might simply label it an near-imitation of Αἰνείω . . . μεγαθύμου in *Iliad* 5.534. But it is also found in this verse-position with *Aenea* once in the vocative, and with different forms of *heroes* twice; it is found with *Iouis* (a different metre) twice, and with proper nouns with still different metres twice. Thus it works as a true generic (same case, same verse-position) sometimes and independently sometimes, as does μεγάθυμος; both nicely exemplify the formulaic technique, though Virgil is not directly copying any Homeric formula. The verb *dixerat* is found with *Aeneas* in 8.152 and 11.120 (Aeneas had spoken), echoing but not quite imitating ὣς ἔφατ' Αἰνείας (thus spoke Aeneas: 17.333); both the Homeric and Virgilian verbs are generic.

Hainsworth-alterations are varied and complicated, and here Virgil really displays his prowess. To save space I must let Hainsworth provide the Homeric parallels to the following:

Inflection: 6.649 *magnanimi heroes* and 6.307 *magnanimum heroum* are inflections of each other.

Separation (very common): 12.728 *emicat hic impune putans et corpore toto* 4.253 *constitit; hinc toto praeceps se corpore ad undas.*

Inversion: 12.728 *emicat hic impune putans et corpore toto*; 9.812 . . . *tum toto corpore sudor.*

Displacement (mobility): compare the MPF *[Et] pius Aeneas*, usually in 1-5, with *praecipue pius Aeneas* 1.220, etc., in 4-7.

Expansion: compare the MPF *ipse Latinus* (12.285, e.g.) with 7.432 *caelestum uis magna iubet. rex ipse Latinus*. *Rex* expands the formula back to the hepthemimeral caesura.

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[14] See Hainsworth (1968).

And these can be combined, as when we find separation with inversion: compare the regular formula *[Et] pater Aeneas* with 5.130 hic *uiridem Aeneas frondenti ex ilice metam // constituit signum nautis pater, unde reuerti.*

The *Aeneid* has a spectacular number of different formulae altogether; it has more even than the *Odyssey*, 2296 vs. 2238, even though it has considerably fewer formulaic *occurrences*, 3233 vs. 6629, and many fewer lines, 9896 vs. 12,111.[15] And when we examine this *abondanza* in detail—especially the extremely numerous Hainsworth-alterations, and especially where the formulaic form is the same as Homer's, but not the content—then we realise that this is not mere imitation. That term can be used of the many places that echo specific lines, themes and passages in Homer (Knauer [1964]). But Virgil has grasped the Homeric formulaic technique more thoroughly than Homerists themselves had until recently; he has made the style his own.

Or rather, one of his own. Part of the reason why Virgil has fewer formulaic occurrences is his delight in coining a new infrequent formula, at the risk of flouting economy, where an oral poet would have repeated an old one; he does not fully exploit his MPF, and may indeed have removed some MPF in successive drafts (see above note 3). But there are also places where he avoids the formulaic style altogether. He sounds thoroughly formulaic in his handling of Anchises, Latinus, *corpore*, *dicta*, and *dictis*, and reasonably formulaic with Aeneas, Ascanius, Dido, Juno, Jupiter, the Trojans collectively, *armis, dona, ora, pater,* and *sidera*. But Turnus and Venus are strikingly lacking in MPF. Formulae for Turnus would have had to assert the truth of individualistic heroism, and formulae for Venus ran the obvious risk of asserting the supreme value of sexual love; both claims are rejected by the truth of the *pax Romana*. Admittedly, Virgil's Venus is more Lucretian than Homeric; but even *alma Venus*, which Virgil did borrow twice, runs the risk of recalling the love-goddess of Lucretius' Book 4. So here is one of the areas where the formulaic style had to be abandoned. It was a free choice: it should be clear by now that Virgil might easily have given MPF to Turnus and Venus had he wished. He had mastered the style so thoroughly that he could have composed in performance.

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[15] Worstbrook (1963: 168) counts more epithets in Virgil than in Homer.

I have not succeeded in finding a full appreciation of this fact among Virgilians. John Sparrow finds in the *Aeneid*

> no attempt to employ the device which Homer inherited from an age when the epic was recited from memory—the repetition of phrases and lines which rested the mind and ears of the audience, warned them of what was coming, and also perhaps helped to lend to diverse materials an adventitious uniformity of tone.[16]

And "there is an artistic sophistication present in the *Aeneid* and quite lacking from [the Homeric] poems, which shows itself in . . . avoidance of merely traditional forms" (88). Given this bizarre picture of the purpose of formulaic composition and the artistic naiveté of its users, Sparrow naturally wants to deny that Virgil consciously adopted it. And so he says that Virgil's frequent repetitions of the same phrase are relatively rare, which is true, but does not tell us why they, and the countless infrequent repetitions, exist at all. He quotes Nicholas Moseley:

> Virgil in writing the *Aeneid* was deliberate in his use of personal epithets, especially so when he repeated one with a particular character . . . [W]here metrical convenience or metrical effect made the use of any epithet expedient it was, nevertheless, not allowed to be unrelated to plot or action.[17]

Sparrow seems to think that if Moseley has shown that the epithets are relevant, the phrases cease to be repetitious. Neither Moseley nor Sparrow knew how much formulaic repetition Virgil actually employed—the 2296 different formulae—nor of the arresting similarity between the Homeric and Virgilian handling of Hainsworth-alteration. But quite apart from that, when Virgil says *(et) pater Aeneas* 16 times in 1-5, he is repeating himself, and we want to know why.

In his fairly recent study, Walter Moskalew says much in rebuttal of Sparrow, and goes on to classify the whole of Virgilian repetition into two categories, design and texture (Moskalew [1982]). The concept of *design* refers to repetitions made for the sake of repetition, where Virgil wants us to say, "Now he is repeating such-and-such an earlier line, or he will sooner or later repeat this one" (see note 12). The concept of *texture*, in contrast, refers to repetitions that do not invite us to look beyond the line in question: they are decorative, they emphasise, they

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[16] Sparrow (1931: 110).

[17] Moseley (1926: 17). Moseley, at least, is able to see that the epithets are metrically convenient, that they are a compositional tool as well as being effective in context.

qualify the mood, they evoke epic style. What Moskalew labels formulaic, phrases that bear an obvious resemblance to formulae in Ennius and Homer, belong to the latter sort of repetition; he sees formulae as part of the texture. Moskalew views the function of Virgil's formulae not altogether differently from the way Milman Parry views Homer's. Parry insists that Homeric formulae are not intended for the sake of repetition, of refrain, and would also agree that they are decorative; their sound adds nobility. He might demur at their emphasising or qualifying the mood, since he thought that the audience was indifferent to the meaning of the epithets (Parry [1971: 127-36]); but he would have to agree that they evoke the epic style, since they are almost all traditional.

We shall see that some formulae have a more complex aesthetic power than this, but Moskalew's evidence and arguments succeed, I think, in showing that Virgil's text is replete with formulae. What he does not show is that Virgil had trained himself to be a master of the formulary technique; indeed he says that Virgil wants to appear, not be, Homeric—to "suggest an affinity with" the traditional epic style (by which he means the Homeric) but not to reproduce it (81).[18] Nor have I encountered subsequent scholars who have detected Virgil's expertise.[19] It is obscured partly because Virgil, for all his vast profusion of different formulae, lacks formulaic occurrences: his 12 formulaic occurrences every 20 lines is definitely, if not woefully, short of the *Odyssey*'s 19 every 20 lines. It is only when we train ourselves to listen for the inexact phrasal-formulaic repetitions that we come to feel how formulaic Virgil can be when he wants to be.

But it is also obscured because it is not immediately obvious why a writing poet should *want* to master the technique of an oral poet. Moskalew asserts, correctly enough, that the formulaic epithets "lend Virgil's style a loftiness traditionally associated with epic, a monumental quality that evokes a sense of wonder—the Virgilian *mirabile dictu*" (80); but you need not possess Virgil's self-training in formulaics to construct a reasonable number of adornments. Formulae may make good *tibicines* (props); or make composition easier; but the labour of learning how to use them must surely take far more time than whatever is eventually saved—especially when so many formulae must be in-

[18] Moskalew (1982) wavers on this point, for a little later he will say that the profusion of Virgil's epithets "evokes the epic style".

[19] Cf. the *Enciclopedia Vergiliana* s.v. '*ripetizioni*' (Briggs).

vented by Virgil himself. The use of formulae may make Virgil sound more like Ennius; but his direct imitations of Ennius can accomplish this. Formulae may make him sound more Homeric; but if he really wanted to add a more Homeric tone to the elaborate contamination of *Iliad* and *Odyssey* demonstrated by Knauer, some more occurrences of MPF for the common nouns whose referents he shares with Homer (such as shields, ships and swords) would have served him better than Hainsworth-alterations that are not all that easy to detect. And after all, *pius Aeneas*, *Saturnia Iuno*, and *ipse Latinus* simply do not echo Homer. Virgil certainly did not persuade two scholars immersed in Virgilian repetition, Sparrow and Moskalew, that his style replicates Homer's. So what *does* Virgil gain when he says *toto...corpore*, say, 8 times in one position, three in another, and once in a third, in good epic-formulaic fashion? And when he behaves like this throughout his poem? *Why* does he display 2296 different formulae?

Virgil's Intention

Virgil wants to sound Homeric—from time to time: a certain number of his formulae repeat Homer's, and reinforce the many direct imitations of Homeric passages. Sometimes Virgil wants to avoid the formulaic style altogether, as with Turnus and Venus. But mostly he wants to sound like a traditional but independent poet, and so he uses his 2296 formulae to reflect a technique, not an individual. He is embedding himself in a tradition of epic hexameter verse that reaches back to the time of the Trojan War and earlier, and is later exemplified by Ennius, Apollonius, the Homeric Hymns, the Epic Cycle, (especially the *Little Iliad* and the *Iliou Persis*, whose stories, though not closely imitated, nonetheless overlap Book 2), Homer himself, and others. If Virgil had not fully developed the formulaic technique, Homer and Ennius and the rest would have been there in the text when they are reproduced, and absent when they are not. But as it is, the entire tradition of which they are part is lurking wherever Virgil uses formulae, however subtly.

But *why* does he want to transcend Ennius and Homer, and embed himself in such a tradition as an independent poet? That seems easy enough: his subject-matter was mostly different from Homer's; if he wished to claim that what he said was true, he usually could not cite Homer as authority. He could, however, construct an analogy: as Homer stands towards the events of the heroic age that he narrates, so I stand

towards those I sing of; as he tells the truth, so do I. This assumes that epic singers, and especially Homer, are regarded as singers of the truth; and Virgil does indeed make this assumption. He accepts the truth of much, at least, of what Homer sang about the city of Troy, and about Aeneas, Priam, Diomedes and the others. On the other hand, he knew that a vast gulf separated not only himself, but also Homer, from the age of the Trojan War. Homer says so: he constantly compares that age with his own, the age of the similes, so many of which are drawn from a world at peace. In those old days, men could lift much larger rocks than two men of Homer's day. Why should Virgil believe that Homer and epic singers in general can traverse such gulfs as these? Whence Virgil's confidence that, as long as he dons the epic mantle convincingly, his own audience will accept his ability to cross even vaster gulfs, and cross them even where he cannot rest on the authority of Homer or Ennius?

We cannot know for sure all that Virgil imagined in answer, but we can reconstruct some of it. Homer invokes the Muses, for Virgil the daughters of Memory, which implies that one of Homer's sources, at least, was earlier epic poetry. The Muse is asked to sing the Wrath of Achilles and the Wanderings of Odysseus; these tales must have been sung by earlier poets. And there is a subtler source. Some formulae, for example, manifestly told a truth that the poem itself validates: "wide-ruling Agamemnon", "King Priam", even "Aeneas, son of Anchises", etc. Homer may have invented these phrases, or inherited them, but in any case they tell the truth. Then when we see "much-enduring Odysseus", in the *Iliad*, before Odysseus has had much to endure, we take it as referring to the tradition, either the *Odyssey* or a predecessor; epithets can tell a truth found in other poems than those they appear in. Reference to the tradition would explain "swift-footed Achilles", which Virgil read many times. Achilles in the *Iliad* does little to justify the epithet: he could not catch Aeneas, in times gone by (20.187-91); he cannot catch Hector now, without Athena's intervention. The formula must refer to traditional events not found in the *Iliad*. Virgil will not have doubted its truth; *we* do not doubt its truth to the poetic tradition. Similarly with the mysterious "Gerenian horseman Nestor". Virgil may well have concluded that Homer learned it from a predecessor, who knew the stories; or perhaps Homer created it to refer to knowledge that he and his audience possessed that did not require exposition. No matter; it told the truth. And so did many others; indeed Virgil probably thought all frequent formulae did, even those he may not have understood.

Among critics, the idea of formulae speaking the truth goes back to Aristarchus of Samothrace: the so-called ornamental epithets state what is true of the noun-referent by *nature*; they contrast with epithets that are chosen to suit the context, to state what is true at that *moment* (Parry [1971: 120-23]). It was through Aristarchus that we earlier revised Parry's phrase "essential idea" into meaning that the epithets in essential-idea formulae state what is essential to the noun-referent (page 203 above). Brilliance is essential to the moon, and to clothing; having rose fingers is essential to dawn; loveliness is essential to streams. When we get to the proper nouns, we must argue (for instance) that being wide-ruling is not only true of Agamemnon, but essential to him. Essential, because traditional; as nature validates the essential truth of the common-noun epithets, so the tradition assures us that Achilles is and must be swift of foot, that there is no Agamemnon that is not wide-ruling—even after death. The Bosnian poets insist, "Well, if it weren't true, the singer wouldn't have sung it."[20] They know this because the singers always use traditional language, and always refer to a tradition.

Homer, then, has (at least) two ways to tell the truth: he invokes the Muses, and he employs formulae, both of which summon the tradition. Virgil has inherited a tradition, Greek but even more Latin, and must summon it in a truth-telling way. He too must invoke the Muses. And he too must employ formulae that sound and behave like traditional formulae. Note how much more satisfactory this is than saying, "Virgil called upon the Muses and used formulae because Homer did", or "because he wished to sound traditional." He taught himself to address the Muse and use formulae, because that is how poets tell the truth.

But this meant that he really had to know how to use them. If Virgil had simply made up a number of formulae and plastered his text with them, he would have sounded amateurish to his own ears and doubtless to the ears of others who knew their epic poetry. As we shall see in detail presently, Virgil knew that Aeneas must have been *pius*, if Troy was the acorn from which the Roman oak grew. So *pius Aeneas* must sum-

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20 Salil Ugljanin, in *Serbo-Croatian Heroic Songs* (Vol.1: 356). Cf. Lord's own remark in Lord (1960: 28): the singer is "the defender of the historic truth of what is being sung; for if the singer changes what he has heard in its essence, he has falsified truth." Repeated readings of the conversations of these singers has convinced me that they think they are conveying either the historical truth, or at least the probable truth, but not a fiction that transmits a higher truth (as we might interpret Virgil's conversations between gods, for instance).

mon a traditional figure and tell the truth about him. It will not do this if it feels like the crude invention of a non-professional; if you want your formulae to be taken as true, you had better sound like a poet who knows his job. Then, when you elect *not* to be formulaic, your audience will feel that this too is a choice, not a sign of incompetence. And Virgil knew his job. He knew that many of his formulae had to be MPF. He knew that some must be repeated frequently: frequent repetition creates familiarity, and a familiar formula comes to sound traditional—even if the poet has made it up. He knew how to employ generic epithets and Hainsworth-alteration. Few, perhaps, have recognised him for the master formulaic-poet that he is; but fewer still have thought that he handled his formulae crudely.

Aristarchus has taught us that formulae speak the truth; Foley, via Paolo Vivante, can teach us something more. A familiar epithet's essential truth occasionally suits its context perfectly; once in a great while is threatens to jar, and the poet uses a substitute; most often it is irrelevant. Irrelevance, says Vivante, actually enhances the style: "The very fact that ["swift-footed Achilles"] has no pointed connection to anything else makes Achilles' image clear and strong."[21] Indeed it does even more than this. If we should see Achilles running swiftly, and then hear him called 'swift-footed', we might hear *only* the speed of his feet; but when 'swift-footed' does not suit the context, then this essential truth, this "image clear and strong", is able to be a synecdoche, as Foley puts it, for Achilles "in his magnificent *entirety*".[22] Foley adds synecdoche to Vivante's realisation of images and Aristarchus' essential truth, giving us a whole that we shall call 'formulaic criticism'.

At this point we might address a word to the objection that Foley is talking about oral and oral-derived poetry, and Virgil was a writing poet. (Of course Virgil read his poetry aloud, he had an audience and thus a literal 'performance arena', in Foley's language—but still, he *read* it.) There are various ways to meet the objection: we might, for instance, urge that Virgil is in some sense oral-derived; or that Foley's performance arena goes beyond the literal gathering place where an oral poet composes before a literal audience. Even more helpful is what Foley calls the oral poet's 'epic register': a distinct and recognisable formulaic

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21 Vivante (1985: 9).

22 Emphasis mine. See Foley (1991: 7-8, 141-43); (1995, 5-7); and *passim* throughout both volumes.

language, tone and gesture that mark a particular tradition shared by poet and audience. Virgil assumes that his audience is familiar with such an epic register, the voice of a complex tradition embracing Greek and Roman poetry and Italian legend, a voice that summons its tradition to the audience's ears and eyes. Some of its formulae will be traditional, as an oral poet's usually are; others Virgil invents, but because they sing with the tone of formulae in the tradition and therefore summon the tradition, they are as good as traditional.

In truth he makes another assumption as well: just as the songs of the oral poet are more or less literal re-singings, so the written *Aeneid* will be heard and re-heard. It becomes its own tradition, and we shall not hesitate to see meanings in each use of a formula that may not be fully evident, to us at least, until we reach the end of the poem for the first time. A Virgilian formula, because it is a repetition, will never be fully understood until its final occurrence; but as we shall see, a critic is wise to bring the end of a poem to bear on its beginning.

Pius Aeneas

If you want your readers to accept your formulae as expressing traditional truths, it will be helpful if they can recognise that some of your formulae are themselves traditional. The phrase *diuum pater atque hominum rex* (father of men and gods: 1.229 et al.) comes right out of Ennius, and is also similar to Homer's regular formula πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε (father of men and gods) contaminated, via the metre, with μητίετα Ζεύς (Zeus the deviser); Ennius and Virgil echo this very rare monosyllabic close. By using a formula that Ennius and Homer also use, Virgil claims to be voicing the same knowledge that they voiced: there is a universal high god who guides and inspires all sentient beings. In 1.731 Dido begins her prayer with *Iuppiter*, echoing Ζεῦ πάτερ (father Zeus) in initial position; again we have a universal god who is traditionally and truly father; indeed we extend his universe by putting the word on the lips of Carthage and the Near East.

Other formulae were probably coined by Virgil. *Sidonia Dido* even deviates from Homer's usual practice of eschewing place-adjectives as epithets, though among the *Odyssey*'s regular formulae we do have Γερήνιος and Θηβαίου. But the formula is as good as traditional, because *Sidonia* expresses truthfully something essential to the traditional Dido. In dramatic contrast we have *infelix Dido*; it is just not true that

Dido is essentially *infelix*. She has had, and has again, her share of woes, but when we first meet her we are moved not only by her generosity and warmth, but by her *felicity* in founding Carthage, and when we last see her, she is rejoined in presumed happiness with Sychaeus. This is a perfect example of Aristarchus' "epithet chosen to suit the *context*". Still, it is part of a traditional technique and expresses something true of Dido at this juncture, her victimisation at the hands of the gods; and (as we shall see) something true of the Roman state, that its foundation came at great cost.

We have discussed *magnanimum Aenean* already. Notice that if we heard it as *merely* an imitation of Homer's Αἰνείω μεγαθύμου, we might get lost in the question whether Homer's Aeneas really is great of soul; but if we let it have a traditional ring, we believe it. *Magnanimus* is not colourful; like μεγάθυμος, it is a generic and blurs Aeneas' individuality, just as *pius Aeneas* enhances it. *Magnanimum Aenean* does not bring about Vivante's vivid realisation of images, or recall Foley's "identity in its magnificent entirety". But it is accurate.

Let us close with the most memorable of Virgil's formulae, *(at) pius Aeneas*, and let us begin with an expansion of R.G. Austin's note on 4.393. Aeneas has just responded to Mercury's terrifying demand and informed Dido that he is leaving; Dido has pleaded and raged, then fled inside; Aeneas is *metu cunctantem et multa parantem // dicere* (in fear delaying, many a word preparing to say). He can follow her or not. *At pius Aeneas . . .*

There is a whole world in these words, but to hear it we must listen with open ears. T.E. Page says, "Virgil begins the next paragraph quite placidly, *at pius Aeneas*."[23] Page is no fool; rather, he is responding to the formulaic quality of the phrase almost as Parry imagined Homer's audiences responding, with indifference to the sense of the epithet. Austin interposes excellently with an analysis of all the appearances of *pius Aeneas* in the *Aeneid*, and calls *pius* "a sensitive symbol of adherence to a personal ideal of devotion, which may nevertheless bring pain and sorrow."[24] He argues that each occurrence resonates with the full meaning to which each occurrence contributes. At first this sounds so like Foley that the literary critic seems to have fully anticipated the oral,

23 Page (1964: xviii-xix).
24 Austin (1955) on 4.393, with references to earlier discussions.

but we must remember that Foley stresses the traditional figure, not merely the character in the poem.

Let us ourselves be strictly literary critics for the next few pages, so that eventually we can isolate whatever insights formulaic criticism alone can add. Let us give an exegesis of *insignem pietate* in 1.10 that takes us further than Austin, and consider how Aeneas acquires the varieties of *pietas*: *erga patrem, erga deos, erga patriam* and *erga rem publicam Romanam*. First, can any of them be seen in the *Iliad*'s Aeneas? Probably not; indeed Hector's flouting of his father's wishes and the city's best interests in Book 22 might discourage us from looking for *pietas* anywhere in Troy. Nonetheless, Homer's Aeneas is special: he is close to the gods. He is Aphrodite's son; he is saved from death by the enemy god Poseidon; he cannot be killed by any Achaean once Achilles is dead (20.338). More numinous still is his rescue by Apollo in Book 5: Aeneas is placed in Apollo's own innermost sanctuary on Pergamos so that Artemis and Leto can heal him—he seems almost to cross the boundaries between god and mortal that Apollo has just pronounced uncrossable (5.442).[25]

This charmed quality is grist for Virgil's mill; naturally Aeneas is the hero chosen to rescue the Penates (*Aeneid* 2.293). At first he rejects *pietas* towards them and the Trojan future, preferring instead heroic death, *mori . . . in armis* (2.317). But Apollo's priest cajoles and threatens, and Aeneas gives in; now, as the rescuer of Troy's *patrios Penatis* (2.717) he stands forth as *pius* both *erga deos* and *erga patriam*. Meanwhile the echo of the commoner meaning of *patrius* combines with the image of Anchises on Aeneas' back to affirm his *pietas erga patrem*. After his harrowing wanderings and his father's death, he is affirmed in Carthage as *pater Aeneas* to the *Troiana iuventus*—Trojan people, literally Trojan youth—(virtually a single formula in 1.699), and therefore *pius Aeneas erga patriam*. And in 4.393, *pius Aeneas* emphasises his belated recognition that such *pietas* cannot accept a ruler's, or even a citizen's, living for the sake of romantic love and neglecting the state (see also 4.86-89).

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25 Jupiter (4.228) refers to Venus' delivering (*vindicat*) Aeneas twice: in *Aeneid* 2, and (so the editors of Virgil) in *Iliad* 5. But her efforts in *Iliad* 5 are a spectacular failure, and she slinks back to Olympus leaving Aeneas to his fate. Jupiter may be indulging rhetorical exaggeration; but Venus may have rescued Aeneas along with Anchises when Herakles sacked the city, *Aeneid* 2.642-43.

In 4.393 Aeneas also takes his first major step in realising his *pietas erga Romam*. Mercury has pointed the way: Aeneas is summoned by *regnum Italiae Romanaque tellus* (the kingdom of Italy and the Roman land: 4.275). Jupiter and Mercury speak of fate; but neither the gods nor fate are responsible for conquering Aeneas' desire *lenire dolentem // solando et dictis avertere* (soften her grief with consolation and with words turn her sorrows aside: 4.393-94), to give in. He is not compelled. Rather, he is acting from his own *pietas*. Not *Aeneas coactus*, but *pius Aeneas*.

So he gives up Dido for the sake not just of the Trojans, but of the Roman future. And his education in *pietas* continues with the vision in 6.851-53, where the only justification for war is *debellare superbos* (make war upon the arrogant: 6.853); apparently Rome cannot accept the old Homeric Achaean ideal of fighting for individual glory. Confirmation of this comes in the last scene: Turnus' pursuit of that ideal is symbolised by his wearing Pallas' *balteus*, belt (12.942); for this display of valorous achievement, he dies. Much is lost with the triumph of the *pax Romana*, just as Aeneas' "personal ideal of devotion", as Austin says, "may nevertheless bring pain."[26] But Rome will succeed only as long as its citizens make the sacrifices of romantic love and personal heroic achievement that *pietas erga Romam* demands.

This constant interweaving of *pietas* and politics justifies the literary critic who, seeing in *pius Aeneas* the Roman future, wonders about the Trojan past. Why did Homer's Troy fail? The answer is twofold: it valued pluralism, and its Council of Elders could be corrupted.[27] Its pluralism let κορυθαίολος Ἕκτωρ (Hector of the flashing helmet: a symbol of his heroic aspiration) stay outside the walls and live or die in glory (22.109-10)—to his city's and his father's sorrow. It let Ἀλέξανδρος

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26 Austin (1955) on 4.393. Aeneas' killing of Turnus is defended as at least consistent with *pietas* by Horsfall (1995: 213-14), who also indicates its political necessity (196). He finds Aeneas' *pietas* "fully formed" by Book 3 (121), but otherwise my understanding of the role of *pietas* seems generally consistent with his reading of the poem. Also, I am more sympathetic than he to the melancholy side of the Roman achievement. Success comes with a price: not only the loss of the heroic and romantic ideals, but *excudent alii spirantia mollius aera* . . . (Others shall more delicately forge their bronze, and make it breathe: 6.847-50). We rejoice for the sake of the ultimate *pax Romana*, and grieve over what is lost. But I do not go as far as Wendell Clausen's "long Pyrrhic victory of the human spirit," in Clausen (1964: 146). Several other powerful studies by W.R. Johnson, Adam Parry, Michael Putnam, Douglas Stewart, and others, much more negative towards Aeneas than the current paper, may be found in Bloom (1986 [ed.]).

27 On Troy's institutions and the corruption of the Council, see Sale (1994).

θεοειδής (Paris, like a god to look upon), choose the life of beauty and sexuality (cf. 3.156-58)—again to his city's and his father's sorrow. Paris also bribed the Council (11.123-25), and made assurance doubly sure. Homer sympathises with this city, but he knows that it is flawed, its fall tragic.[28]

A beloved yet blemished Homeric Troy was as welcome to Virgil as a numinous Homeric Aeneas. He must have seen in Paris' refusal to return Helen, in the Council's willingness to tolerate this obstinacy, and especially in Hector's rejection of his father's pleas, a failure in *pietas* of one variety or another. This failure, this *hamartia*, would have appeared to Virgil to be a traditional truth about Troy, and enabled him to lend his own picture of Troy a tragic coloration. Once *dives opum* (rich in possessions: 1.14, cf. 2.22), once widely ruling (2.556-57), honoured and loved by Aeneas, his Troy commands our sympathy. But like Homer's, it is deeply flawed. It has not developed its citizens' *pietas erga patriam*; otherwise it could never have tolerated Helen's continued presence against every consideration of national interest. It has not repudiated the Judgement of Paris, which is embodied in Paris and Helen, but also in Dido and *Aeneas uxorius* (4.266); Aeneas' renunciation of Dido corrects a specifically Trojan failure. It has not taught its citizens to abandon individual heroism: we have already witnessed Aeneas ignoring Hector's plea for the city's future, and preferring heroic death. Its government is not so much corrupt as invisible; no political voice stems the mad feelings (*caecique furore*, 2.44) that demanded the ingress of the Horse, although the city's walls—its national security—are at stake. Troy's failure shrieks the need for *pietas*.

Let us now move past a strictly literary-critical analysis of line 4.393, and ask what formulaic criticism can add to our appreciation of it. *Pius Aeneas* is an elegant MPF that Virgil handles in the traditional style: 15 exact repetitions, 3 repetitions in one Hainsworth-alteration, and one in another. The epithet, at least, is traditional, for Ennius has the somewhat awkward words *pium ex se // Anchisum generat*. Whether it was he or Virgil who coined *pius Aeneas*, its formulaic repetition in Virgil encourages us to treat it as traditional and argue, from our Aristarchan interpretation of Parry's 'essential idea', that it tells a traditional truth about a traditional figure. The *pietas*, Virgil asserts, that we do not find in the

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[28] On Homeric sympathy and Trojan tragedy, see Sale (1989).

Homeric Aeneas was nonetheless a virtue that the traditional Aeneas *must* have possessed. Troy was a political failure because it lacked *pietas*; how could the person selected to correct this failure not have been *pius*? How could the gods have chosen a man without *pietas* to forge the link between Trojan failure and Roman success? But the forging is nothing other than the growth in Aeneas' *pietas*. The whole chain has just six links: the Trojan past (lacking in *pietas*), the evolving *pietas* of Aeneas in its four varieties, and the Roman future (successful because of *pietas*). And formulaic criticism assures us that when *pius Aeneas* (in 4.393, for instance) summons the traditional Aeneas in his "magnificent entirety", we hear the truth of the entire chain. Formulaic criticism asserts that the rich meaning of *pius Aeneas* laid bare by literary criticism is traditional and true.

But the entirety of Aeneas includes even more than this. It includes Aeneas as a father: as *pater Ascanii* (3.343) always; as father of the *Troiana iuventus*, the Trojan people, once he reaches Carthage with his *pietas erga patriam* established (1.699); and as *Romanae stirpis origo* (source of the Roman stem) as well, though not nominated this until late in the poem (12.166), when he has thoroughly learned *pietas* towards the Roman future. Being *pater* may be seen as the external expression of his being *pius*, the two attributes growing side by side in the course of the poem. And we have a right to call the *pater* traditional, partly because the facts that affirm it are traditional (Ascanius, Aeneas' leadership of the Trojans, his siring Rome), and partly because the father has a formula of his own, *pater Aeneas*, which we could analyse just as we did *pius Aeneas*.

As master of the formulaic technique, Virgil moves the listener's mind from *pius Aeneas* in 4.393 to the entire traditional figure, then back to *pater Aeneas*; uncovering this process is a further contribution of formulaic criticism. The formulaic critic need not stop here: any additional qualities that we can find in the traditional Aeneas—the aura of divine favour that clings to the Homeric Aeneas, for instance—can legitimately be heard in 4.393. But let us close with a paradoxical reflection. Let us put the literary-critical hat back on and assert that *pius Aeneas* summons *pater Aeneas* directly—bypassing the middle man, the traditional Aeneas. It does this by violating the rule of oral composition that two frequently-employed MPF should not be metrically interchangeable. It does it because the two *p*'s bind the ideas together by constantly recalling *pietas erga patrem* and *pietas erga patriam*. Thus his most

frequent formulae insist that Virgil the master of formulaic style is really an outsider to orality. They urge us to reflect that Virgil's very labour to acquire his formidable formulaic expertise ironically betrays the neo-Alexandrian scholar-poet.[29]

[29] Many thanks to Carl Conrad, Robert Lamberton and Bruce Thompson of Washington University in St Louis, and Anne Perkins of Webster University.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

TWO LEVELS OF ORALITY IN THE GENESIS OF PLINY'S *PANEGYRICUS*

Elaine Fantham

It may seem paradoxical to bring to a conference on the transformation of orality a paper dealing with an elaborately wrought literary text from Trajan's Rome, for certainly Rome in the first century of our era was a highly literate and literary society. However, there are significant ways in which both the age of Pliny the Younger and this particular text return to and depend upon a greater stress on orality. So it will be useful first to set the interpretation of Pliny's only surviving speech into context, beginning with a more general survey of oral performance and the reception of literature in the last years of the first century and during Pliny's later years.

What does the student of literature after the Homeric age associate with orality? First comes Homer's heroic narrative, initially composed without the aid of writing, and relying on the prefabricated components of a rich formulaic vocabulary; epic heard and recalled (more or less) as it was heard; then perhaps distichs of elegy or short lyrics improvised and sung from the couch of the symposion by archaic Greek nobles flushed with wine. In the public assembly of Athens or elsewhere, speeches oral in the simple sense were also oral in the more interesting sense of *ex tempore*: either improvised responses to unforeseen or only half-foreseen challenges, or simulated improvisation, to add credibility to drafted decrees or prepared policy statements. Greek court briefs for prosecution and defence were prepared, but would also require improvisatory elements: again, oratory at its most artificial, witty and stylised, offering epideictic displays in praise of everything from love to garlic or bumble bees, might be spoken by Isocrates or a member of his school from carefully composed and memorised texts, or might answer a challenge to display spontaneous eloquence, as was the boast of Gorgias or his follower Alcidamas.

At Rome oral performance developed new forms: as early as 13 BC Horace speaks regretfully of old men and boys alike declaiming verse at the dinner table, and deplores an increasing flock of casual and prolific amateur poets.[1] Besides improvised poetry, improvised declamation was the main form of rhetorical training in the Augustan age, practised by adults as well as adolescent pupils, and attended as literary entertainment by the historians Asinius Pollio and Livy, and even by the Emperor Augustus and his right hand men Maecenas and Agrippa.[2] While this kind of declamation may have lost its appeal by the end of the first century, recitation of verse and prose texts proliferated: the practices of improvisation and recitation include almost every literary form in the age of Statius, Martial and Pliny. These social activities dominated the cultured city man's passive experience of verbal art.[3] However, the same man as author saw his social performance not as an end so much as a means of transition to the written text; for this written text would reach those outside the city, in villas or provincial communities, and was expected to spread the work of literary art beyond its immediate place and time. Improvisation and recitation are the most frequent modes of poetry, while recitation seems to replace the exercise of declamation as the dominant medium of spoken prose, and as a secondary form even of oratory itself.

When Cicero praised the poet Archias in 66 BC for his skill at improvising verse on a given theme and producing instant variations on his own settings,[4] he was praising a Greek poet, who could either compose by improvisation in small genres, or produce longer narrative texts to celebrate victorious campaigns in the epic form: composed for a coterie, such verse was probably not intended to circulate in writing beyond perhaps a copy to the dedicatee. But a century later the Neapolitan Greek Papinius Statius both improvised his sympotic and occasional verse, and published it. Alex Hardie's fine study provides the best survey of the range of such improvisation in Greece and Rome, and its development in prose and verse.[5] Hellenistic poetry saw an increasing growth of

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[1] Hor. *Epistles* 2.1.109-10: *pueri patresque severi / fronde comas vincti cenant et carmina dictant*; cf. 117 *scribimus indocti doctique poemata passim.*

[2] For a fuller account see Fantham (1996: 90-94), and Bonner (1969) and (1977: ch. 6).

[3] See Fantham (1996: 220-21).

[4] Cicero *pro Archia* 18.

[5] Hardie (1983).

praise poetry in hexameters, and this metre formed the bulk of Statius' occasional poetry, recited and often composed, as he insists, in immediate admiration of or emotional response to the tables of his hosts. The preface to his first collection of *Silvae* claims one poem was written over dinner "*intra moram cenae*". Other occasional poems celebrating a statue or a wedding, if not improvised, were written in one or two days and baptised in oral performance: always these poems are seen as speech acts, of praise, consolation, congratulation or worship.[6] Poetry was its performance. Very often Statius describes the scene around him as his poem unfolds: a conspicuous example is his speech of thanks to Domitian (*Silvae* 4.3) for being invited to his feast in the new palace, retailing in the continuous present tense the exotic decorations of the dining hall and the radiance of the Emperor's presence.

The smaller compass of the epigram makes it less surprising that not only Martial but also Pliny and Suetonius should write about improvising poems at the table. The situation is encapsulated in Martial's two liner:

> Lege nimis dura convivam scribere versus
> Cogis, Stella. "Licet scribere nempe malos."[7]

> Stella, your law of dining is too harsh, forcing your guests to write verses! "But you can always write bad verse."

Diners who did not have to sing for their supper were regularly entertained by poetic, dramatic or musical performance, whether comic scenes or readings, or a *lyristes*, perhaps as likely to be a singer as a plain instrumentalist. By day the lectures and diatribes of an Isaeus or a Euphrates in quiet corners of the Forum were ostensibly impromptu,[8] and even the more elaborate speeches of Dio Chrysostom were first delivered and only afterwards published in writing.

If the recitation was usually of a previously composed work, the audience at least experienced the new work by hearing, however inattentively; at home too, in view of elderly eyesight and cramped, un-

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6 Compare the preface to *Silvae* 3: *Hercules Surrentinus . . . quem in litore tuo consecratum, statim ut videram, his versibus adoravi*, "your [statue of] Hercules at Sorrento, whom I immediately worshipped with these verses as soon as I had seen him dedicated on your shore."

7 Martial 9.89. See also Pliny *Ep.* 4.7.4; 4.14.2 and 7.9.9, Suetonius *Titus* 3.2 and *de Crammaticis* 23.3.

8 For Isaeus see Pliny *Ep.* 2.3, for Euphrates, *Ep.* 1.10.

punctuated manuscripts, they listened to slave readers rather than reading for themselves. The public recitation was first practised as a social activity by Asinius Pollio more than a century earlier. Pollio's interests were as much in preserving the literary texts as in the audience experience. He also founded the first public library at Rome, a decade before Augustus' Palatine library, and both hosted and attended displays of declamation, that is, improvised oratory on a set theme.[9] Originally a form of training of adolescents for political and judicial oratory, declamation developed in the age of Augustus into an *ex tempore* art form practised by adult experts. The declaimer either constructed speeches of persuasion for a historical character at a time of crisis and decision-making, or argued the defence of imaginary clients in the context of some lurid family crime. Quintilian, Pliny's own teacher, denounced declamation as a teaching method, for its remoteness from the real world of law and policy, and although it survived in the schools it would seem that by Pliny's generation it was no longer a diversion for adult performers or audience.[10]

In contrast, composing and reciting verse became such a disease of the leisured class in Pliny's day that Juvenal professes to have taken up satire purely in order to take revenge. Yet as Juvenal complains of the boredom of listening to amateur epic and tragedy, he thinks in terms of the written texts, and the generic *Telephus* or *Orestes* of his first *Satire* is written right up to the margin and the last space on the final column of the scroll.[11]

Pliny is more polite. Himself an indefatigable composer, he regrets openly the indifference and impatience of audiences coerced into attendance by social duty. Among his many letters involving recitations, two in particular measure the extent to which such readings dominated his social life. In the first (7.17) Pliny responds to apparent criticism for giving readings of his speeches, with a dialogue formulating both sides of the question.

> Sua cuique ratio recitandi; mihi quod saepe iam dixi, ut si quid me fugit ut certe fugit admonear. Quo magis miror, quod scribis fuisse quosdam qui

[9] See Dalzell (1955: 20-28).

[10] For Quintilian's strictures on declamation see *Institutio* 2.10.3-12 and 5.12.17-23.

[11] Juvenal 1.1-6, especially 4-6: *impune diem consumpserit ingens / Telephus aut summi plena iam margine libri / scriptus et in tergo necdum finitus Orestes?* (Shall the outsize *Telephus* waste the whole day unpunished, or *Orestes*, written up to the margin of the end of the scroll and not yet finished on its reverse?).

> reprehenderent quod orationes omnino recitarem; nisi vero has solas non putant emendandas. A quibus libenter requisierim, cur concedant si concedunt tamen historiam debere recitari, quae non ostentationi sed fidei veritatique componitur; cur tragoediam, quae non auditorium sed scaenam et actores; cur lyrica, quae non lectorem sed chorum et lyram poscunt. At horum recitatio usu iam recepta est. Num ergo culpandus est ille qui coepit? Quamquam orationes quoque et nostri quidam et Graeci lectitaverunt. Supervacuum tamen est recitare quae dixeris. Etiam, si eadem omnia, si isdem omnibus, si statim recites; si uero multa inseras, multa commutes, si quosdam novos quosdam eosdem sed post tempus adsumas, cur minus probabilis sit causa recitandi quae dixeris quam edendi?

> Each man has his own reason for giving readings; mine, as I have often said, is to be pulled up if I make a mistake—as I certainly do. I am all the more amazed, therefore, that you mention in your letter that there were some people who criticised me for reading out speeches at all; unless of course they think that speeches are the only kind of writing that is not in need of correction. I should very much like to have asked them why they grant (if they do still grant) that history ought to be recited, which is not a genre of display but of truthful representation of fact [i.e. like speeches?]; that tragedy should be recited, though it requires not an auditorium but a stage and real actors? or lyric poetry that needs not a reader but a chorus and accompanying lyre? It is now an accepted practice to recite these genres. Surely then the person who began the practice should not be blamed? And also, both Roman and Greek orators have regularly read their speeches aloud. Well, is it not superfluous to recite something you have already delivered? Only if the speech is unchanged, if the audience is unchanged, and the occasion follows close on the original event. But if the author makes many expansions and changes, if he adds new listeners or addresses the old ones, but after a lapse of time, why is there any less reason to recite one's speech than to publish it?

The whole letter, and the last sentence above in particular, is highly relevant to the genesis of the *Panegyricus*.

The other letter comes late in Pliny's collection (9.43) and concerns only his verses. Apparently Pliny often reads his short verses in public, and someone has told him he does not read them well. So he proposes to have a freedman read them for him, although the freedman himself is new to recitation. But then what is Pliny to do while the man reads? Sit by, nodding and gesturing approval? Mime his text alongside? We do not know how his correspondent, Suetonius, answered this delicate query: my point is only to stress how far Pliny went in assuming that he *must* read his works aloud, despite his evident commitment to editing and producing a final, written version.

The focus has now been concentrated on Pliny, and his attitude to reciting his own works. From this point we will consider only his speeches, and the three phases of their existence that Pliny discusses: firstly on the occasion of their public performance, the *actio* or delivered speech; then in subsequent recitation to friends; and finally in the written form or *oratio*.[12] But already in distinguishing between live *actio* and published *oratio*, Pliny is differing in usage and perhaps also in emphasis from Cicero, for whom *actio* was strictly the manner of delivery and *oratio* the style or form of language, whether in the spoken or written text. Pliny seems to have given all his speeches the further stages of recitation and publication, and the early letter 1.20.9, discussing the relationship between an orator's spoken and published texts, indicates his own views on the proper development through the three phases.

A good performance, he declares, is different from a good written speech; it can excel purely as a performance, and fail as a text, but there is no way a good written speech could not be a good performance—it serves as the model (ἀρχέτυπον) of the performance, even including 'spontaneous' figures like jokes and self-corrections that evoke a 'live' presentation.[13] In this way the most perfect performance will be the one that most resembles the written version—*sequitur ergo ut actio absolutissima, quae orationis similitudinem expresserit*—provided there are no constraints of time. Clearly then, the *oratio* in this reference has been written down before and for the performance. On the other hand, Pliny more often speaks of *oratio* in the sense of a subsequent edition: only this is compatible with his claim that an *oratio* should be as full as possible, and satisfy in its written form the full potential of the case, which may have been cramped in the context of delivery.

Two private speeches that Pliny prepared for later publication were his address on presenting the library to his home town of Novum Comum and his funeral *laudatio* of his friend Spurinna's son. The speech at Comum was not even an *oratio*, but a *sermo* to the town council. The word suggests informality, but is normally used by Pliny for his

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[12] Pliny articulates this distinction first in *Ep.* 1.20.9. The best discussion of Pliny's new approach in this letter to the spoken and written text is Picone (1977: 122-23).

[13] 1.20.9: *At aliud est actio bona, aliud oratio. . . . persuasum habeo posse fieri ut sit actio bona quae non sit bona oratio, non posse non bonam actionem esse quae sit bona oratio. Est enim oratio actionis exemplar et quasi* ἀρχέτυπον. The reference to spontaneous figures (*figuras extemporales*) follows in 1.20.10.

speeches at a political meeting.[14] Certainly he takes this one seriously, asking Pompeius Saturninus in a letter to review it and send criticisms, and writes sending a second, revised, version for further criticism that will determine whether he publishes it or holds it back. In this case he is further inhibited by the fear that publication, while it will serve the purpose of stimulating others to compete in generosity, may seem to be blowing his own trumpet (*privatae iactantiae*).

The other case is more complex. It was a long-standing Roman custom for the next of kin to deliver a *laudatio* of the dead at their funeral, and from this gradually sprang the notion of others composing written *laudationes* as their personal tribute. Cicero, for example, composed *laudationes* for written circulation of both the republican suicide Cato of Utica and his sister Porcia.[15] But in the age of Pliny these eulogies could be recited after the funeral itself. According to a letter to Spurinna (*Ep.* 3.10), Pliny composed a brief life of Spurinna's son without any request from the grieving parents, and did not even inform them before reciting the tribute to others, in case it might renew their grief. He admits that while he is forwarding the text, he is beginning to doubt whether he should send it in its present form, or wait to add the material he proposes to include in a second scroll (*volumen*). The motive he gives is desire to broadcast and perpetuate the young man's memory, and his letter itself urges Spurinna to read the text and advise him, as he would a portrait artist or a sculptor, on any adjustments he should make to the written portrait. Here we see, as with Aquilius Regulus' *laudatio* for his dead son so mocked by Pliny,[16] that private texts were first performed in recitation, then published or privately circulated to publicise an occasion or memorialise the deceased, moving through successive revisions towards their final, written form.

With the *Gratiarum actio* to Trajan, preserved from antiquity as the *Panegyricus*, we come to a highly public speech, but still one that is neither judicial nor deliberative: formally Pliny's *Gratiarum actio* is an

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[14] See Sherwin-White (1966: 105 on *Ep.* 1.8.16). The distinction reflects not the deliberative political genre but the context of a meeting, whether of the Roman Senate or an Italian or provincial council.

[15] Cf. Cicero *ad Atticum* 12.4 (the *laudatio* of Cato) and 13.48 (of Porcia).

[16] *Ep.* 4.7. Regulus is an extreme case. Pliny reports that Regulus first recited this composition, then had it multiplied in a thousand copies and circulated to the cities of Italy and the provinces with instructions that it be read aloud.

epideictic text.[17] Thanks and praise often go together (Greek ἐπαινεῖν is both, and Latin *laudare* is often used of thanking). Despite a lack of models for the *Panegyricus*, one can usefully compare Pliny's address to Trajan with Cicero's *pro Marcello*, a speech of thanks to Caesar for agreeing to the return of his antagonist, the old republican Marcellus. In fact the *pro Marcello* is a double precedent, being both a speech of thanks given in and for the Senate, and the first such speech to an autocrat. One of Ovid's letters from exile shows that it was already an established practice for consuls to thank the Emperor for their office in AD 13: the poet's brief imaginative account of Pompeius' entry into office reconstructs the context of his *Gratiarum actio*:

> purpura Pompeium summi velabit honoris,
>   ne titulis quicquam debeat ille suis. ...
> templaque Tarpeiae primum tibi sedis adiri
>   et fieri *faciles in tua vota deos*, ...
> cumque deos omnes, tum quos inpensius aequos
>   esse tibi cupias, cum Iove Caesar erunt.
> Curia te excipiet, patresque e more vocati
>   intendent aures *ad tua verba* suas.
> Hos ubi facundo tua vox hilaraverit ore,
>   utque solet, *tulerit prospera verba dies*
> *egeris et meritas superis cum Caesare grates*
>   (qui causam, facias cur ita saepe, dabit),
> inde domum repetes toto comitante senatu,
>   officium populi vix capiente domo.[18]

The purple of the highest office will cloak Pompeius, so that he lacks nothing from his honours. ... [I see] you first approaching the temple of Tarpeia's hill, and the gods show themselves assenting to your vows. ... and while you wish the gods to be well disposed, you will more urgently wish Caesar and Jupiter to favour you. The Senate will welcome you and the fathers, duly summoned, will offer their ears to your words. When your voice has cheered them with its eloquence and the day has brought favourable words, as is its wont, and you have given due thanks to the gods along with Caesar (who will often give you cause to do so again) then you will return home escorted by all the Senate, as your home scarcely contains the homage of the people.

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[17] The best short general introduction to the *Panegyricus* is Radice (1968: 166-72).

[18] Ovid, *Ex Ponto* 4.4.25-42. I have italicised the references to formal vows and thanks that will recur in Pliny's account of the occasion.

Since Julius Caesar first designated consuls for three years ahead in 46 BC, it was increasingly the case that consuls owed their 'election' to nomination by Rome's *princeps*, her first citizen. Trajan himself had been twice consul before becoming Emperor, but on his return to Rome as Emperor inaugurated the year AD 100 by taking the consulship for January and February. He later marked his approval of Pliny by approving his election with his friend Cornutus Tertullus as the fourth pair of consuls for the same year. If every consul gave a vote of thanks (and there were up to twelve every year), we can see that such speeches would be formalities—brief and predictable. Pliny was not even the first consul to give thanks to Trajan in this first year of his presence as Emperor at Rome, but it was he who converted this piece of etiquette into something more, and began an entirely new genre.

The rest of this paper considers two aspects of the *Gratiarum actio*: first, in line with the discussion above, our evidence for Pliny's equal concern for the occasion of the oral performance and the subsequent recitation, circulation and final draft of the written text; secondly, and more significantly, the role played by oral utterance, by formal ritual language, in constituting the solemnity of the speech as we have it.

Three of Pliny's letters discuss his procedure, first in composing this speech, then in refining it after delivery, and each letter brings out a new aspect of the speech. In 3.13 Pliny sends the text (*librum quo nuper optimo principi consul gratias egi*) to Voconius, and comments on the difficulties he experienced.

> In ceteris enim lectorem novitas ipsa intentum habet, in hac nota vulgata dicta sunt omnia; quo fit ut quasi otiosus securusque lector tantum elocutioni vacet, in qua satisfacere difficilius est cum sola aestimatur. Atque utinam ordo saltem et transitus et figurae simul spectarentur! Nam . . . disponere apte, figurare varie nisi eruditis negatum est. Nec vero adfectanda sunt semper elata et excelsa. Nam ut in pictura lumen non alia res magis quam umbra commendat, ita orationem tam summittere quam attollere decet.

> In other speeches the very novelty holds the reader's attention, but in this the subject matter is noble but too familiar; everything has been said before; it is known and commonplace, leaving the listener free to pay attention to the diction, and all the more demanding because of it. I would wish him at any rate also to examine the arrangement, the transitions and the figures of speech. For only well educated speakers can control . . . appropriate arrangement and varied ornament; even so there is a danger in continuous loftiness and exaltation of tone; for just as in a painting shadow

best enhances the impression of light, so in a speech there must be quieter passages as a relief for brilliance.

A little later a fuller letter to Vibius Severus (3.18) contrasts the scale of the original speech, adapted to its place and time and customary form, with his aim of expansion in written form. Pliny sees it as a patriotic duty both to give the Emperor proper praise and to provide an example from which future Emperors would learn the path to glory. He reports how he invited his friends to a recitation of the written version, and was amazed at their eagerness, when they even requested a third sitting. And yet, he adds, men are usually reluctant even to sit through the actual speech in the Senate.[19]

To Vibius he claims that people welcomed his speech because it was free and gladly offered: instead of offending by its falsehood, it delighted by its truthfulness. What is more, he has confidently used a richer style to avoid the effect of artificiality that more restrained speech would have had in these circumstances.

The speech, then, is substantially expanded, and scholars have devoted scrupulous care to distinguishing the supplementary material from what must have been its original content: while Sherwin-White[20] argues that Pliny simply expanded his praise of each separate item as he moved through Trajan's career, others have excluded material such as Trajan's early military record or his domestic harmony from the original performance as irrelevant to the occasion.[21] It was, in fact, very much a senatorial occasion, and examination of the speech has convinced me that the core of Pliny's actual vote of thanks must have been the strictly Senate-related material that occupies the last 35 sections of the speech. Here the new Consul speaks before Trajan and the Senate of Trajan's own behaviour and respectful treatment of the Senate in canvassing for his third consulship and holding that office. And Trajan as Consul

[19] Here the key elements are the expansion of the written version *bono civi conven-ientissumum credidi eadem illa spatiosius et uberius volumine amplecti* (I considered it only appropriate, as a loyal citizen, to give the same subject a more expansive and elaborate treatment in a written version), and the description of the theme as *[materia] quam in senatu quoque, ubi perpeti necesse erat, gravari . . . vel puncto temporis solebamus* ([a subject] which we used to resent after the first minute even in the Senate, where we had to endure it). See also Picone (1977: 129-32).

[20] Sherwin-White (1966: on 3.18).

[21] On the *Panegyricus* see especially the edition of Durry (1938) and comments on the added material in the review by Sir Ronald Syme (1938). For a survey of more recent scholarship see Fedeli (1989: esp. 513-14).

showed he considered himself the representative of the Senate, even as Pliny now identifies himself with the Senate of which he had long been a member.[22] Pliny's entire audience had taken part in the ceremonies that the speaker is now reinterpreting so as to put moral pressure on both the Emperor and Senate. If it was potentially boring for Pliny's senatorial audience and later his personal friends to listen to enumerations of Trajan's virtues, even enlivened by contrasting abuse of his near predecessor Domitian, must it not have been supremely wearisome for them to listen to Pliny's recapitulation of recent events, most of them formalised procedure?

But the political complexity of these chapters justifies their seeming monotony: their ostensibly descriptive purpose of honouring the Emperor's behaviour by recording his actions and the Senate's response was in fact prescriptive. And the language of public formulae carried an authority all the greater because the words were fixed and could not easily be devalued, as were the "original compliments and flatteries of orators"; for we should not pass over the other challenge in this form of speech, which has now been so splendidly investigated by Shadi Bartsch[23]—the problem of restoring meaning to courtly cliché and credibility to praises that had for so long been forced and insincere. The very words were stale before Pliny could use them.

For students of the later Roman panegyrics there is much to note even in the early sections of the written speech: I cannot pass over, because it is to become so central a part of future panegyrics, Pliny's highly successful description of Trajan's *adventus*, his first appearance as Emperor in Rome—a completely convincing and fresh scene of public rejoicing whose only precedents known to me are in Horatian lyric: 3.14 *Herculis ritu*, his celebration of Augustus' return in 24 BC, and the anticipatory 4.5, *divis orte bonis*.

Yet this delightful passage can hardly have been part of the original core *actio*. It is the consulate, not Trajan's record as *Imperator*, that is the overt theme of Pliny's speech. This entails a preliminary embar-

22 Mause (1994) is largely focused on the later Panegyrics; hence perhaps his stress on the facts of power underestimates the formal or psychological importance of the Senate in this context: "Selbst in der *gratiarum actio* des Plinius, die im Senat gehalten wurde und in der sicherlich ein senatorisches Programm an Trajan enthalten ist, besteht die Funktion der Senatoren einzig und allein in der Zustimmung zu den Regelungen, die Nerva in Bezug auf sein Nachfolge getroffen hat." (112).

23 Bartsch (1994: ch. 4 'The Art of Sincerity: Pliny's *Panegyricus*').

rassment in addressing Trajan's refusal as Consul in 98 to be re-elected to a third consulate for 99, but Pliny does equal honour to the man and to the office by attributing this refusal (*Pan.* 60) to Trajan's recognition that he could not exercise the consulship while he was campaigning away from Rome. Rome, then, is where the consulship realises its value, at Rome and in dialogue with the Senate who is the other half of Pliny's audience.

Pliny hits his stride when he surveys the record of Trajan's acts since his return to Rome. Study of these sections reveals that each major moment of constitutional procedure is marked by recall of public speech, and what is more, in most cases recall of formulaic ritual utterance in antiphony between the Emperor-Consul and his Senate. Initially Pliny opens with gestures and symbols of the newly significant office—Trajan's inaugural act as Consul for the third time, with a colleague also holding his third consulship, as he turned to ask the *sententia* of his designated successor (61.1), also about to hold his third consulship; then the ritual actions of his colleagues and their successors, putting off and resuming the honorific *praetexta* and the escort of lictors (61.7). He adds sound to vision as he simultaneously evokes the people's pride as they see the new Emperor attending the election in person, patiently enduring the long sequence of formulae during the formal announcement (*longum illud carmen comitiorum*, 63.2).

Apostrophising Trajan, Pliny recalls how he actually swore obedience to the laws in words unfamiliar to former Emperors (*adigendum te praebes in verba principibus ignota*, 64.1), standing before the presiding Consul who recited the words of the oath. Then turning to the Senate, Pliny repeats and elaborates this record of oral utterance: the Emperor himself enunciated (*iuravit expressit explanavitque*, 64.3) the words by which he devoted his own person and family to the anger of the gods if he should knowingly violate his oath. With the same alternating apostrophe to Emperor and Senate, Pliny first recalls to Trajan how again on the Rostra he swore obedience to the laws with the gods as his witness (65.1), then interprets the significance to the Senate. This procedural act on entry into office is answered in the same paragraph by Trajan's oath on departure from office that he had committed no acts contrary to the law. Though the words (*te nihil contra leges fecisse*, 65.2) are constructed as indirect statement, the actual form of the oath emerges clearly.

At the same time that Pliny exalts and celebrates Trajan's legality, he reminds the Emperor, and the written text will survive to remind him, in later years when he might be tempted to autocracy, that Trajan has sworn obedience to the law.

Even more momentous is Trajan's entry into the Senate as Consul and his exhortation to the Senate to take up its liberty and undertake with him the care over the empire common to both Senate and Emperor. This too, if not a formula, is recognised as a gesture made by every Emperor before Trajan, but never before believed. Pliny strives with descriptive language to reconstitute Trajan's words, intonation, expression, eyes, stance, gesture, the sincerity of his whole bodily presence at this crucial moment.[24]

The ritual *nuncupatio votorum*, declaration of vows for the Emperor's safety, forms another topos binding his double audience (67.3). Pliny repeats the familiar words to his senatorial audience, asking them to note the language of their vows wishing the Emperor continuing health "if he has directed the state well and to the common interests of all" (*si bene rem publicam et ex utilitate omnium rexerit*, 67.4) before again turning to Trajan himself and reinterpreting these words as a pact made with the gods. In a third variation on the theme, the actual vow, the oral formula, is recast for the Senate in direct speech to represent the Emperor's own thoughts (67.8). In return Pliny conjures up the reverberation of the vows for the beloved Emperor offered up all over the empire in response to the oath he has made (68).

This citation of ritual language is not unprecedented as a device to lend solemnity and respect to a political utterance: I think above all of Cicero's speech for Murena, which opens with the prayer Cicero himself had offered to the immortal gods as consul and presiding officer at Murena's election to the consulship. Cicero recites the prayer in order to argue that the fulfilment of his oath for the safety of the state depends upon upholding the validity of Murena's election to the same office.[25] In both cases the stress is on the reciprocity of pious prayer and divine sanction. Again the citation of an autocrat's words to remind him and bind him by them is exploited by Cicero in his thanks to Caesar for

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[24] 67.1: *quam inadfectata veritas verborum, quae adseveratio in voce, quae adfirmatio in vultu, quanta in oculis, habitu, gestu, toto denique corpore fides!* (the unaffected honesty of his words, the conviction in his voice, the candour of his expression, the complete sincerity of his gaze, his posture, his gestures, in short of his entire demeanour!).

[25] Cicero *pro Murena* 1.

permitting the return of Marcellus as an act of respect to the Senate:[26] Cicero not only repeats and responds to Caesar's official speech at the relevant session; he quotes and answers a spontaneous reaction by Caesar to the Senate's eager offer to give him official protection: "I have lived long enough for either my natural life or my glory."[27]

The same device helps Pliny through his over-elaborate recapitulation of Trajan's actions and words as Consul: standing to greet the candidates at the next consular elections, receiving the Senate's acclamations "so much more noble and revered!" (*tanto maior, quanto augustior*, 71.4); praying as presiding officer "that the actual conduct of the election would result well and favourably for us, the state and yourself" (*nobis rei publicae tibi*, 72.1). In Pliny's rendering Trajan's invocation is answered chiastically by the silent prayers of all the Senate, that every action of the Emperor might result favourably "for yourself, the state and us" (*tibi rei publicae nobis*). He even suggests that Trajan himself, if he could, would have added to the formula a wish that the gods might heed his prayers only if he continued to merit the Senate's loyalty (72.3).

Pliny would have his listeners and readers believe that this climax inspired the Senate to an ardour and enthusiasm that even Trajan could not control. But if Pliny is to convince Trajan himself that in these manifestations he witnessed true loyalty from his Senate, he must deal with the shameful memory common to all his peers that they had uttered the same words to the hated Domitian. To this the only appeal is from the words to their actual intonation and utterance: the onlooker can tell, as Trajan did, the tone of true love from that of suppressed hate and fear. Through Trajan's alleged memory (*testis ipse es*, 73.1) Pliny recalls these demonstrations of loyalty, and the senators' cries "O blessed man" (*o te felicem*, 74.1), "have faith in us; have faith in yourself" (*crede nobis crede tibi*, 74.2) and prayers that the gods might love Trajan as he loved the Senate (74). Pliny will dare one further step "is it true," he asks "that we also cried out 'o blessed are we!'" (*o nos felices*, 74.4).

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[26] Cicero *pro Marcello* 3: *Intellectum est . . . paulo ante omnibus, cum M. Marcellum senatui reique publicae concessisti . . . te auctoritatem huius ordinis dignitatemque rei publicae tuis vel doloribus vel suspicionibus anteferre.* (It became clear . . . to everyone a little earlier, when for the sake of the Senate and the Republic you allowed M. Marcellus to return . . . that you put the authority of this order and the dignity of the Republic before your own private resentment and suspicion.).

[27] *Pro Marcello* 25: "*Satis diu vel naturae vixi vel gloriae.*"

Pliny could risk this hyperbole because he and his audience knew this was no invention. It was on written record, as he shows even while he pleads his inadequacy, doubting whether speech could encompass or memory recall "the words that you, Senators, to protect them from loss of memory, decreed should be committed to the public record and incised in bronze" (*et in publica acta mittenda et incidenda in aere censuistis*, 75.1). So the oral components that add such solemnity to Pliny's claims of harmony between Emperor and Senate before the gods themselves are confirmed in two kinds of writing, indeed may owe their presence in Pliny's speech to his consultation of this tedious senatorial record on parchment and in bronze.

But Pliny has not finished with extracting the juice from these formulaic utterances. He returns for the last time to the theme of oaths, honouring Trajan for announcing the newly elected Consuls and reciting for them the oath of office that he himself had sworn only shortly before.[28]

Much is achieved by this cumulative reiteration of formulaic oaths to and by the gods,[29] to and by the Emperor: most of all, that these words still carry a solemnity that can override their past abuse in swearing loyalty to bad Emperors. The words must have resounded as the general confession or marriage ceremony does to day to members of the church, and the invocation of the gods will have reinforced the familiar formulae. When Pliny returns in the written text from a eulogistic account of Trajan's impeccable private life, it is to define his own speech, expressing the twofold nature of his own *actio* as both a public declaration of thanks to the Emperor and a personal one. Here too the ritual utterances performed by Trajan at the joint election of Pliny and his old friend Cornutus are given prominence: "you deigned to preside over our election and rehearse that most reverend formula for us (*sanctissimum illud carmen praeire*, 92.3), we were elected by your judgement, and announced by your voice, as both nominator in the Senate and herald on the field" (*suffragator . . . declarator*, 92.3). But I have again deliberately glossed over Pliny's stress on the written commemoration of his moment of glory: "no other page will record us as Consul but the one

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28 77.2: *stabant candidati . . . adigebanturque in verba in quae paulo ante ipse iuraverat princeps*. (The candidates stood . . . and were requested to take the same oath sworn by the Emperor himself a little earlier.).

29 On the role of the gods as an authority superior to both Senate and Emperor see Showalter (1990: ch. 3).

that records your name as Consul, and our names too will be added to the *fasti* (the inscribed magisterial calendar) which are headed by your name!"

Despite the sanction that ritual oral utterance has given to Pliny's affirmations of mutual loyalty, the written public record now has equal authority, if not the greater authority of its endurance as a *monumentum*.[30] Unfortunately the constitutional significance of all this dwindles as the speaker praises Trajan's affability in allowing him and his colleague Cornutus the glory of remembering that they were actual Consuls, and *his* Consuls (*nos . . . consules fuisse et consules tuos*, 93.3): Pliny seems to have blinded himself to this paradox of autocracy.

Only the peroration is not addressed to Trajan, because Pliny invokes a higher audience: he turns to the gods as guardians of empire, and above all to Jupiter Capitolinus, reducing the plurality of possible prayers and vows to a single vow for the Emperor that will contain and entail all other objects of prayers. Now Pliny himself performs the vow, uttering on his own account the prayers in the modified form that Trajan himself once bade men offer, that the gods should preserve the Emperor "if he rules the state well and in the interests of all" (*si bene rem publicam, si ex utilitate omnium regit*, 94.5): he cannot forebear to amplify and so he amplifies even this with a fuller prayer to Jupiter for Trajan's longevity and desired succession.

> primum ut illum nepotibus nostris ac pronepotibus serves, deinde ut quandoque successorem ei tribuas, quem genuerit quem formaverit similemque fecerit adoptato, aut si hoc fato negatur, in consilio sis eligenti monstresque aliquem, quem adoptari in Capitolio deceat.
>
> First preserve him for our grandsons and great-grandsons, then grant him one day a successor born of him and formed by him in the image of the adopted son he is, or if fate denies him this, guide and direct his choice to someone worthy to be adopted in your temple on the Capitol.[31]

Is it all over? Can the senators go home, or the reader end his recital, or the slave *anagnostes* close the *volumen*? NO! Pliny must renew his pledge to the Senate and draw them into this magic circle of new hopes and promises; they too are reminded of an oral event—their acclama-

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[30] Let me add here the last such reference: in 95 Pliny reports that his debt to the Senate is conveyed in *monumenta*, that is the *Acta Senatus*: can this be yet another speech of thanks?

[31] Radice's translation (1969).

tions of his election that have inspired him to serve them and earn their approval (95.2). This transformation of a simple act of thanks into a lasting eulogy has also taken the fixed oral formulae of government and elevated them into quasi-biblical texts on which Pliny erects his sermon—a sermon first delivered, then given recitation, then finally embalmed as a model text that would have many descendants.

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Abbreviations used in the text: *ABV* = Beazley (1956); *Add.*^{2} = Carpenter (1989); *ARV*^{2} = Beazley (1963); *Para.* = Beazley (1971); *LIMC* = *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*; *RVAp* II = Trendall & Cambitoglou (1982); *RVSIS* = Trendall (1989).

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